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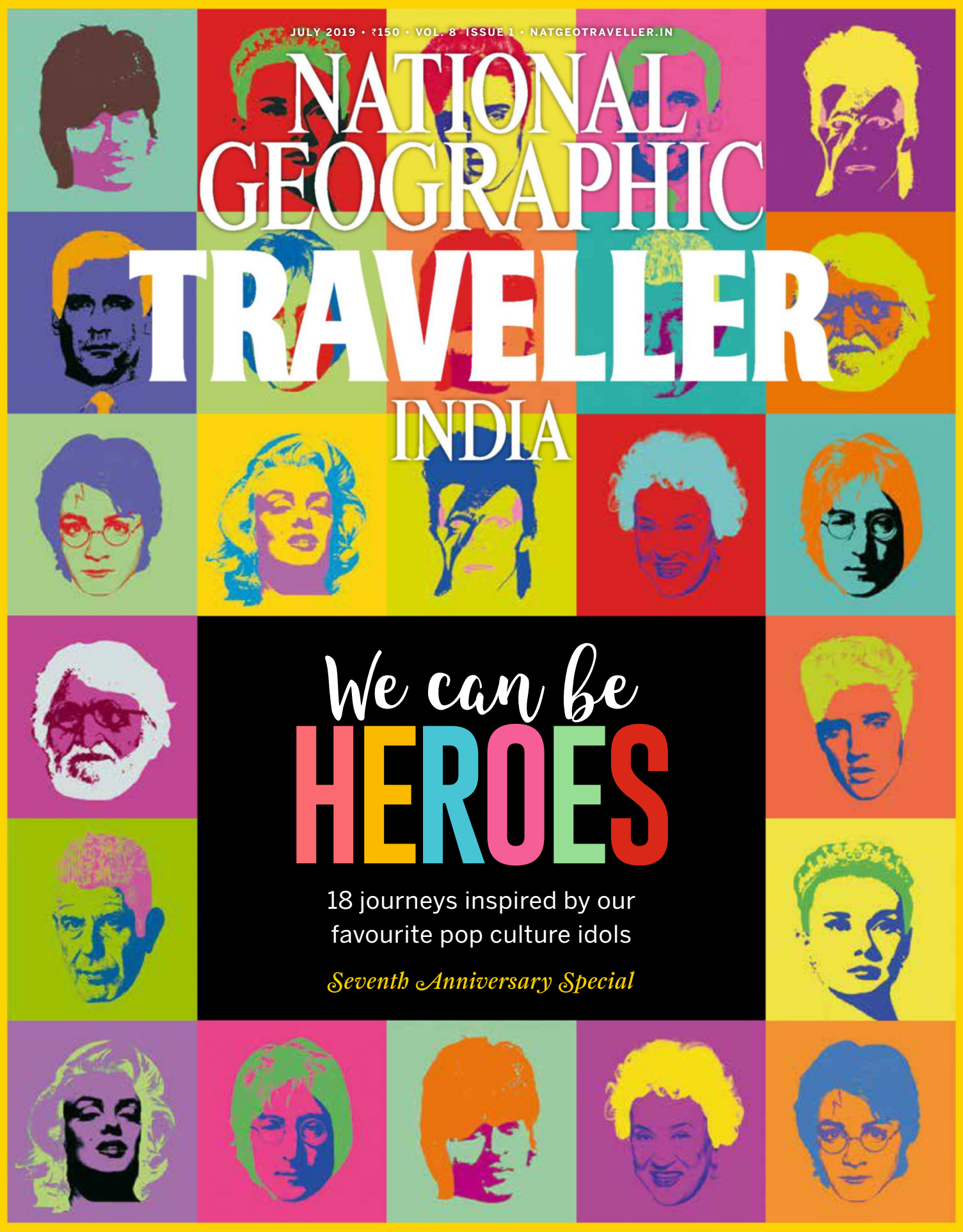


We can be HEROES

18 journeys inspired by our favourite pop culture idols

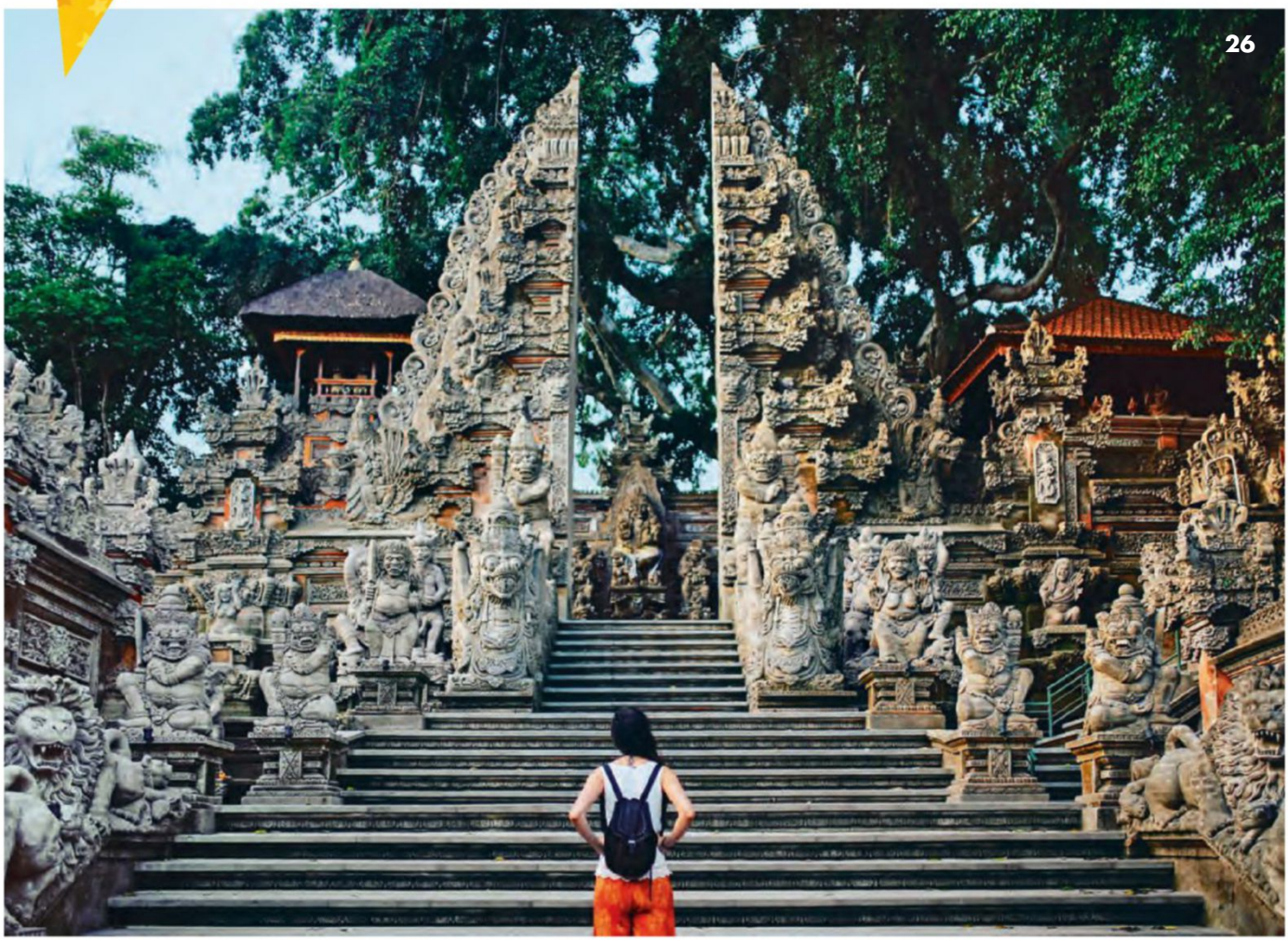
Seventh Anniversary Special

SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TRAVELLER INDIA

JULY2019

VOL. 8 ISSUE 1



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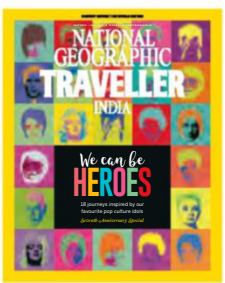

To travel is to follow your favourites. In this issue, we tail 18 pop culture favourites across the world, harlequin icons such as The Beatles, Shah Rukh Khan, Julia Child and Gabriel García Márquez. Because all you need is love. In children's books and rock music, on movie screens and Warholesque soup cans. All you need is love. And just enough art to remember it.

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About us National Geographic Traveller India is about immersive travel and authentic storytelling that inspires travel. It is about family travel, about travel experiences, about discoveries, and insights. Our tagline is "Nobody Knows This World Better" and every story attempts to capture the essence of a place in a way that will urge readers to create their own memorable trips, and come back with their own amazing stories.

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POP GEEKS AND GODS

In this modern agnostic world, pop culture is the closest thing we have to a shared religion. Matinee idols, artists and rock stars are our gods and goddesses, feeding us an endless supply of enchanting lore and myths. For this movement to thrive though, it needs fans; followers who have gone beyond aloof observation. Pop culture requires that fans click below to subscribe, not let it just play in the background.

One of my favourite explorations of fandom is *Almost Famous*, Cameron Crowe's amusing semi-autobiographical movie about a wide-eyed teen writer and music geek, William, who receives the assignment of a lifetime when a magazine commissions him to join his beloved rock band on the road. William's mentor is Lester Bangs, a senior critic with a hilarious zeal for mainstream culture. Lester would often launch into passionate defences of popular music, and a few lines from one fiery soliloquy, delivered to William in a diner, have always stayed with me. "The day it ceases to be dumb is the day it ceases to be real. Right? And then it will just become an Industry of Cool."

Pop culture is the industry of joy, I like to think. Its idols make our lives immeasurably more tolerable. We carry their songs in us, we live inside the fables they create. Sometimes, we travel to be reminded of them. Or other times, they recreate the places for us. Children of the nineties probably bought into two exaggerated but equally popular versions of New York, depending on what they watched—*Friends* or *Seinfeld.* If you grew up glued to the former, you thought the Big Apple was a city full of broke singletons who spent endless hours in coffee shops, cracking wise. If it was the other, your New York was a place with impatient eccentrics out to steal your soup recipe.

In *NGTI*'s seventh anniversary edition, pop culture is the dominant conversation—travelling to relive the stories of famous movie stars, musicians, chefs and authors, to seek out their influences in the places they loved, from Colombia to Vietnam. Our contributors have handpicked their deities—Anthony Bourdain, Don Draper, The Beatles, Harry Potter, Shah Rukh Khan, among 18 names. We are true believers in these men, women and characters. Travelling in their shadow feels wonderful, delirious and appropriate. If this issue comes off as an unapologetic love fest, that's entirely accurate. As Lester would put it, we are righteously dumb and hopelessly uncool.★

POP CULTURE IS THE INDUSTRY OF JOY. ITS IDOLS MAKE OUR LIVES IMMEASURABLY MORE TOLERABLE

ANOUCHKA/ISTOCK UNRELEASED/GETTY IMAGES

OUR MISSION

National Geographic Traveller India is about immersive travel and authentic storytelling, inspiring readers to create their own journeys and return with amazing stories. Our distinctive yellow rectangle is a window into a world of unparalleled discovery.

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THE ITINERARY

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Honey wine in shacks, *spris* in cafés—highs in the Ethiopian capital spill beyond coffee

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WONDER CITY

OUTDOOR ADVENTURES, VISIONARY ART, AND FIRST NATIONS–INSPIRED FARE IS ON THE ITINERARY IN VANCOUVER

Vancouver is a wonder city," Canadian author Stephen Leacock once wrote. "It has the combined excellence of nature's gift and man's handiwork." Today this statement rings truer than ever. The glittering glass metropolis—set against temperate rainforest, ocean inlets, and the Coast Mountains of British Columbia—keeps finding new ways to shine.

Over the past five years, the city has taken important steps toward reconciliation with the native Squamish, Musqueam, and Tsleil-Waututh people, and a thriving indigenous tourism industry has grown along with it. More restaurants and bars are sourcing local ingredients—from foraged berries to Douglas fir infusions—and a booming brewery and distillery scene rivals that of Portland.

An ethic of sustainability permeates the culture of Vancouver, which brims with community gardens and farmers markets, plus LEED-certified buildings and more than 440 kilometres of bike paths. You can now pedal from the cedars of Stanley Park to the nudists of Wreck Beach. From there, mountains, islands, and wonder await.
—Serena Renner

In Vancouver's Coal Harbour, kayakers skim alongside city skyscrapers.

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

KNOW IT

MODERN HISTORY

NEW ENERGY REVITALISES ONE OF VANCOUVER'S OLDEST NEIGHBOURHOODS

When you spot the terracotta-tiled Millennium Gate and the dragon-topped red lampposts, you know you've arrived in Vancouver's vibrant Chinatown. For a primer on the neighbourhood, join **Historical Chinatown Tours** to venture inside 100-year-old clan houses, where Chinese elders play mah-jongg, and behind the scenes at **Sai Woo**, the modern rendition of a restaurant that first opened in 1925. The sign out front is a crowd-funded replica of the original, which pays homage to Pender Street's neon glory days. Other highlights include the **Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden**, an oasis of flowering trees, koi ponds, and stone courtyards built in Ming dynasty style, and the **Rennie Museum**, showcasing one of Canada's biggest contemporary art collections (by appointment) in the district's oldest building. This summer the **Chinatown Storytelling Center** opens with displays detailing the arduous path from Chinese immigrant to Canadian citizen. After dark, get a taste of the dining scene that's redefining Chinatown. Opt for *mantou* buns and "kick-ass fried rice" at **Bao Bei** or Japanese-accented Italian fare at its raved-about sister spot, **Kissa Tanto**. For a nightcap, try the Opium Sour at **The Keefer Bar**, a sexy twist on a traditional Chinese apothecary.

Chinatown's Rennie Museum offers visitors an artful eyeful.

BLAINE CAMPBELL/RENNIE COLLECTION, VANCOUVER

ROOM CHECK

- Trendy
- New
- Classic

THE DOUGLAS

A star of the new Parq Vancouver casino complex, The Douglas mixes playful sophistication with Pacific Northwest earthiness. An illuminated, glass-enclosed Douglas fir tree presides over the check-in counter, and wood features in the decor throughout, along with mid-century furnishings and views of Vancouver. On the sixth-floor rooftop, The Victor restaurant sends out classic steaks plus regional seafood such as Dungeness crab and British Columbia king salmon.
thedouglasvancouver.com

EXCHANGE HOTEL

Unveiled in 2018, the EXchange Hotel occupies 11 floors of the 1929 Stock Exchange Building. During its LEED Platinum conversion, the first in Canada, the Edwardian facade was integrated into a modern tower. A Mediterranean restaurant, bar, and café—named after the Greek island Hydra—opened this spring.
exchangehotelvan.com

ROSEWOOD HOTEL GEORGIA

The marble fireplace and grand staircase in the 1927 lobby hark back to the days when Nat King Cole stayed here. In 2011 the hotel debuted the indulgent Sense spa and sleek new rooms with soaking tubs. In the basement speakeasy, Prohibition, find a throwback haunt for live music, creative cocktails, and traditional pours of absinthe.
rosewoodhotels.com

SEE IT

CHOOSE YOUR ADVENTURE

WHETHER YOU'RE INTO ART OR THE OUTDOORS, THERE'S A GAME PLAN FOR YOU

NATURE LOVERS

1 Walk through the rainforest of **Stanley Park** with Candace Campo, the First Nations owner of **Talaysay Tours**, and you'll start to see cedar bark as clothing, hemlock needles as the makings for tea. "The forest is our grocery store, our pharmacy," Campo says. Take that notion to **Deep Cove**, for a paddle up Indian Arm before checking out the **North Shore Spirit Trail**, a new greenway luring pedestrians, joggers, bikers, and in-line skaters.

CULTURE VULTURES

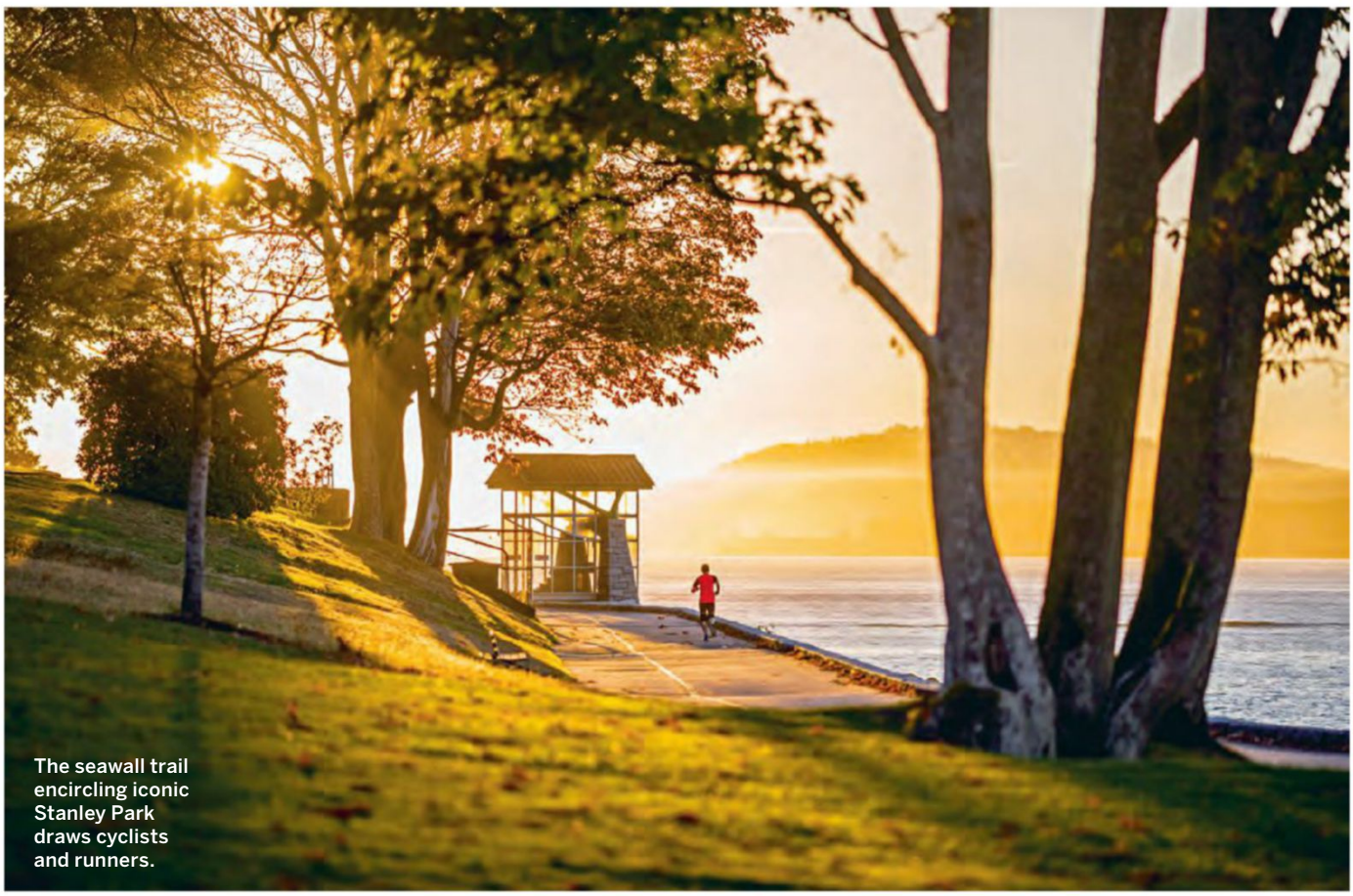
2 The **UBC Museum of Anthropology** curates innovative programs and in 2017 opened the Gallery of Northwest Coast Masterworks. Led by **Vancouver Art Gallery**, the contemporary art scene has expanded with the new **Polygon Gallery**, dedicated to Canadian photography. Fans of Coast Salish art should stay overnight at **Skwachàys Lodge**, where 18 rooms were designed by indigenous artists like Richard Shorty, whose work is sold in the lodge gallery.

MUSIC MAVENS

3 Downtown's Granville Entertainment District is still one of the best spots to catch a show, thanks to a trifecta of historic venues—**Vogue, Orpheum, Commodore Ballroom**—that attract top talent. In other areas, discover hidden gems such as the **Rogue Folk Club**, which stages bluegrass and roots music in a churchlike hall in Kitsilano. Below the cobblestone streets of Gastown, **Guilt & Co** offers pay-what-you-can jazz, soul, and cabaret.

CRAFT CONNOISSEURS

4 **Vancouver Foodie Tours** will shepherd you to the tastiest treats at the **Granville Island Public Market:** Oyama sausages, Benton Brothers cheeses, Lee's honey donuts. The neighbourhood of East Van, aka "Yeast Van," hosts breweries and distilleries including **Bomber** and **Off the Rail** brewing and **Odd Society Spirits**. Go behind the tanks with **Canadian Craft Tours**. Nearby, the semi-monthly **Eastside Flea** is a hip gathering of indie makers.



The seawall trail encircling iconic Stanley Park draws cyclists and runners.

VANCOUVER TOURISM (MAN), TAMER KOSELI (ILLUSTRATIONS)

GO WITH NAT GEO

On the eight-day "Canadian Rockies by Rail and Trail," travellers visit Vancouver before boarding the glass-domed Rocky Mountaineer train for an epic journey to the stunning landscapes of Banff, Yoho, and Jasper National Parks. *natgeoexpeditions.in*

EAT IT

TASTES OF THE PLACE

INDIGENOUS, ASIAN, AND EUROPEAN INFLUENCES FLAVOUR THE MELTING POT

NATIVE ROOTS

A pioneer of First Nations– inspired cuisine, the indigenous-owned **Salmon n' Bannock** serves the namesake *bannock* (a traditional quick bread) with mushrooms, as well as maple-cured salmon and slow-cooked bison. **Mr. Bannock**, the city's first indigenous food truck, began offering Squamish- style smoked meats and clay-oven creations last year. Head to **Forage** for dishes made with wild ingredients, and belly up to **Botanist** for cocktails like Candy Cap Magic, which arrives in a cloud of wood-scented dry ice.

STANDOUT SUSHI

The restaurant that introduced flame-seared *aburi* and pressed *oshi* sushi to Canada, **Miku** makes its own sake to pair with the Aburi Prime platter of nine rice bites topped with everything from jalapeno-spiced sockeye to Japanese Wagyu. **Kishimoto** offers six types of oshi—rectangular rice pedestals for delicacies such as pickled mackerel and flamed eel. Be sure to arrive early at **Raisu** for the Oceans Offering: 12 multicoloured oshi squares presented in a bamboo box. The izakaya makes only 10 orders each night.

DUMPLING TRAIL

Dumplings reign supreme in Richmond, an epicentre of Asian cuisine. Start at **Su Hang Restaurant** with intricately pleated *xiao long bao* (Shanghai soup dumplings) stuffed with pork and broth. The nearby **Dinesty Dumpling House** serves eight types of soup dumplings, plus pan-fried *guo tie* and water-boiled *shui jiao*. In summer, stroll to **The Dumpling Master** at the Richmond Night Market, whose gyoza range from kimchi beef to vegan spinach. Korean dumplings, or *mandu*, are a popular side dish at **Samsoonie Noodle & Rice**.

TEA TIME

The Vancouver version of a London fog means a frothy Earl Grey latte laced with vanilla syrup. Just about every café makes one, and the flavour has seeped into **Earnest Ice Cream**, baked goods, and local beers. **Granville Island Tea Company** supplies 12 loose-leaf varieties of Earl Grey for custom cups, while **Parallel 49th Café & Lucky Doughnuts** boils its own vanilla bean syrup. **Cartems Donuts** has created a London fog variety stuffed with tea-infused whipped cream and iced with Earl Grey glaze. It also sells tasty vegan options.

The Aburi Prime sushi platter at Miku (left) **and head bartender Jeff Savage at Botanist**

VMARK YUEN (SUSHI), JEFF.SAVAGE@BOTANISTRESTAURANT.COM (BARTENDER), TAMER KOSELI (ILLUSTRATIONS)

THE GREAT ADDIS BEVERAGE BINGE

HIGHS IN THE ETHIOPIAN CAPITAL DON'T END AT COFFEE. TRY HONEY WINE IN TINY SHACKS, SIP SPRIS IN CHAOTIC CAFÉS, AND NURSE HOMEGROWN WINES INSIDE TRENDY BARS BY BHAVYA DORE

The *spris* is an authentic Ethiopian speciality, a sludgy and potent concoction made from mixing coffee and tea.

ANDRZEJ KUBIK/SHUTTERSTOCK

I never know the answer to the polarising question, am I a coffee person or a tea person, since I am decidedly a coffee-and-tea person. Why this pressure to choose between two A+ beverages? Luckily in Addis Ababa I did not have to. All thanks to the *spris*.

Combining coffee and tea in one single, potent cup, the spris is bound to send conservative blowhards keeling over in disgust. And I concede, it is not for everyone. But it was certainly for me.

My first **spris** was at **Raizel Cafe**, a small enterprise in the centre of Addis Ababa. It arrived in a transparent cup, a dark, sludgy top layer smothering a translucent, lighter brown bulk below. As I drained it, the first hits of chai gave way to a strong undertow of coffee. I was an instant convert.

Ethiopia is not an obvious choice for tourists, a landlocked country once synonymous with global hunger and developing world despair. But Addis Ababa, a city of three million, is aspiring to build itself as a great African city in the continent's fastest-growing economy. A week later, I was smitten, spris and all.

But I was not a philistine throughout. I also consumed pure Ethiopian coffee repeatedly and enthusiastically during my eight-day trip. The country doesn't let you forget that this is the birthplace of the coffee bean; legend claims that a shepherd wandering through Kaffa—the region that gives coffee its name—stumbled on caffeinated goats energised on wild beans. Several centuries later caffeinated humans continue to get energised on ground beans.

The local **macchiato** is a sturdy, flavoursome bolt of caffeine, chocolatey, foamy, richly addictive. Then there is the standard-issue black coffee that arrives in tiny, chai-style glasses, bursting with the burnt deliciousness of fresh roasting. Street-side stalls are common; but one of the best places was **Tomoca,** a small enterprise with a no-nonsense decor, busy queues and the

Addis Ababa (top) **is in the throes of transformation, with construction in full swing in different parts of the city; Originally said to be the 'drink of nobility', tej** (top right) **is a sweet, saffron-coloured mead made from water, honey and gesho leaves; The open-air Merkato market** (bottom) **is a hotspot for chaotic bliss, with busy shoppers making their way through humans and animals, as music blares around them.**

pungent scent of singed beans.

It's not just the birthplace of the bean though, you are also constantly reminded that this is the birthplace of humanity itself, the beginning of everything. The country's tourism board brands it as the "Land of Origins." **Lucy**, a 3.2-million-year-old human fossil, and the nation's most famous entity, now rests at the **National Museum of Ethiopia.** Lucy, or *Dinknesh* as she is known in Amharic, is a small-brained, bipedal Australopithecus afarensis specimen discovered in 1974 and has been crucial to our understanding of human evolution. There was something arresting about visiting Lucy and other ancient remains even though bones in a glass case might be underwhelming for some. In case there was any doubt that this was the cradle of it all, a large information board illustrated how "the world became African."

But almost everything else here is new. Emerging from a violent communist past and civil war, this is a country, and a city, swirling in the midst of construction. Skeletal buildings with scaffolding and Chinese signs are springing up everywhere. A new light rail was opened in 2015. A new address system is being planned. A new, reformist prime minister is in power.

This was only my second time in Africa, my first time in sub-Saharan Africa, so everything crackled with the frisson of the new: the nameless streets, the white-clad Ethiopian Christians, the Chinese-hating locals, the chunky Amharic script. Even the chaotic **Mercato,** said to be Africa's largest open-air market, heaved with energy—donkeys wandered through, music thumped, people chewed the narcotic khat leaves and women clutched at their purses.

But the most novel were the tej bars, tiny shacks serving the local brew of **honey wine**, originally said to be a drink of the nobility. It took several minutes to find **Topia Tej Bet** through the warren of darkened alleys behind a luxury hotel, and once my friends and I reached we were the only group in sight. Made from water, honey and *gesho* leaves (plucked from an African shrub), the sweet, saffron concoction arrived in transparent goblets. The tej, also Ethiopia's national drink, tasted strange at first, then grew on me gradually. Two litres later, at 9.30 p.m. we were kicked out.

But we were not done yet. Bundling ourselves into a taxi, we made for **Black Rose Bar**, but as with Ethiopian cab drivers, he was having none of it, and refused to take directions from us. "Listen to Abba," he said, using the generic honorific for elders, whilst confidently steering us in the opposite direction. "What about Google Abba?" one companion asked. But Abba simply laughed. My friend promptly disintegrated into pidgin, the refuge of the desperate and confused. "But we no go there," she beseeched. Abba laughed

BENEDEK/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES (CITY), GRANT ROONEY/AGEFOTOSTOCK/DINODIA PHOTO LIBRARY (PEOPLE), SOHADISZNO/ISTOCK EDITORIAL/GETTY IMAGES (MARKET)

and ploughed on, stopping triumphantly at Black Pearl Bar. He smiled; it was almost what we had asked for. Barely sheepish, he demanded more cash.

When we finally reached Black Rose Bar it was worth every misspent birr, every extra kilometre in the wrong direction. The buzzing lounge with the vibe of auteur cool, the dim but not too dim interiors, the ambient but not too loud music; all of it was just so.

That night among others brought me to these five words I did not expect to say: Ethiopian wine is a marvel. I can't tell you much about the body or tannins or the subtle hints of avocado and rosemary, but I can tell you that both the **Rift Valley Chardonnay** (260 birr/₹630) and **Acacia Rose** (200 birr/₹485) were plenty delicious and plenty cheap too. Ethiopian beer was no slouch either. The two local brands I tried, **Habesha**, and **Walia,** were perfect; so bitter, so cold. But everyone's favourite au courant trend Ethiopian food—best known by the sourdough crepe, the injera and its various accompaniments—was simply not for me.

Ethiopia was one of only two countries not to be colonised, except for a brief stay by the Italians, and that impact lingers in the cuisine. Local iterations of pasta were uneven—bland, thin spaghetti with boiled vegetables or fat noodles sitting in an anodyne tomato sauce. But at **Ristorante Castelli**, an Italian-run Addis Ababa institution, there was little room to complain. Situated in an old building on Mahatma Gandhi road off Piazza, it has been serving up hearty pastas in the capital since the 1950s, when Francesco Castelli, an Italian soldier, decided to stay back after the brief colonial misadventure.

With its creaking floorboards and large windows, it conjures up all the requisite charisma that behoves such a popular family-run outfit. The Castellis are among the few remaining European families in the city, and as Addis has developed and evolved around it, the restaurant, now run by Francesco's daughter Tiziana Castelli, remains much the same.

Its walls are studded with pictures of celebrity visitors—including Jimmy Carter, Angelina Jolie and Bob Geldof, who called it his favourite restaurant in the world. Why do people love it? "The food, the food, the food," exclaimed Tiziana. "The quality and the portions. We don't give small sophisticated portions where people come out feeling hungry." From deep inside me the afternoon's mushroom ravioli and tiramisu grunted in agreement.★

ESSENTIALS

The **Ethnological Museum** set in the former king Haile Selassie's palace is a fine introduction to the country. It has also maintained the king and queen's chambers *(entry: 100 birr/₹245)*. The **National Museum of Ethiopia** *(entry: 10 birr/₹25)*, contains four storeys, the most important being the basement that houses Lucy and other ancient remains. The first floor has a nice selection of contemporary Ethiopian art. The "**Red Terror" Martyrs' Memorial** Museum offers glimpses into the country's violent communist dictatorship *(entry free)*. **Tomoca** has some of the best coffee to drink and to buy. **Risorante Castelli** is a perfect lunch pit stop and **La Mandoline** has some lovely French fare. The city does not lack for cheap, good quality alcohol—try a tej bar, such as **Topia Tej Bet** or a more modern option, **Black Rose Bar.** If you're lucky you can catch the great musician **Mulatu Astatke**, the father of Ethio-jazz, at a local concert.

The city has shaken off a violent communist past and has welcomed change but still manages to retain its unique culture.

GTW/IMAGEBROKER/DINODIA PHOTO LIBRARY

The Kecak dance, a Balinese rendition of *Ramayana*, takes place at the sea-facing Uluwatu Temple.

PETER SCHICKERT/IMAGEBROKER/DINODIA PHOTO LIBRARY

A BACKPACKER'S BALI

SAVOURING FOOD, FRIENDSHIP, AND FREEDOM ON A SOLO TRIP TO UBUD AND KUTA BY POOJA NAIK

I waited at the edge of a cliff that dropped straight into the Indian Ocean. A shoulder-high brick wall scaling the far ends was the only barricade that separated me from the tumbling surf below. Draped in orange sarongs, tourists gathered at the sea-facing Uluwatu Temple to witness the Kecak dance, a Balinese rendition of the *Ramayana*. Perched atop the southwestern tip of Bukit Peninsula, the temple welcomes all with gateways flanked by Ganesha statues. Inside, the coral-covered walls featured intricate carvings of Bali's mythological creatures. The cherry-red sun began to dip behind the sea, as if igniting the small amphitheatre, where the stage was set for the fire dance.

"Chak, chak, chak-a, chak," the chant reverberated as 30-odd men, wearing only checkered skirts, marched their way into the arena. The plot was the same as the Indian version of the epic. Almost hypnotic, trance-like, a masked Ravan and a doe-eyed Sita—the antagonist and protagonist—entered, commanding complete attention. Their eyes widened, expressions shifted from fear to torment. The rhythmic chants rose and fell, powering the theatrical drama. Just then, the sky grew ominously dark and the story built to a climax when Hanuman swooped in and set fire to Ravan's castle. The burning embers at the stage centre evoked gasps from transfixed spectators, including me. As I sat at the 11th-century temple bearing witness to a nearly century-old dance form more than 9,000 kilometres away from home, I thought back to moments in my native India when I had been rather indifferent to temple visits. Travel makes you more accepting of cultures, sometimes, even your own.

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Bali is an unabashed cliché—a harmonious paradox of cultural rawness and overcooked tourists, the latter pouring in by the bucketload,

just like the ice that chills their Bintang beer. They all seek a slice of paradise, whether it be forests, sea or zen.

When work brought me to Indonesia I decided to add on a five-day long solo trip in Bali. My mind needed some clearing and my heart some mending. With a suitcase, bookings to my hostels and an appetite for adventure, I arrived on a corrosively hot, tropical evening. The plan was not to have a plan.

Kuta was my first stop. Crowded and frenzied, this southwestern town is the island's party pocket. Placard holding vendors from spas, and souvenir shop salesmen packed the narrow but well-lit lanes of Kuta Market, cajoling potential customers with hard-to-resist offers. Live music gushed out from open-air bars, soundtracking the ebb and flow of *taksi* cabs filtering through the pedestrian traffic emerging from the nearby beach, a crowd that evidently bought their clothes on the same market streets they now traversed.

Along with Juan and Younes, two other solo backpackers I had met earlier at the hostel, from Switzerland and Germany, respectively, I followed the heady scent of spices wafting from *warung*s (local eateries). We dined at an al fresco restaurant with Chinese lanterns and steel furniture. We tucked into hot plates of nasi goreng (fried rice), *mie goreng* (fried noodles) and

chicken satay on skewers served with a side of piquant peanut sauce— all Indonesian staples. Socialising has not been my strongest suit, but staying at hostels helped me hone them, and I gradually shed my inhibitions. Conversations swirled around Swiss gold, Germany's political scenario and India's many festivals. In between embracing cultural differences and breaking stereotypes, food and friendship were savoured that night.

No matter the exertion, it is difficult to resist exploring Kuta's nightlife. Acting on an impulse turned into a night of bar hopping, leading us to Sky Garden, which is possibly the region's most iconic club that has been graced by the likes of Yellow Claw, Steve Aoki and Afrojack. The rooftop bar of the multilevel club flirts with the sky and dishes out panoramic views of a glistening Kuta. Hip-hop numbers brought party goers—mostly local teens and backpackers—to the dance floor. It was only at two a.m. that we decided to call it a night.

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Sometimes, lounging at a beach is the perfect antidote to a night out. The sun blazed the following noon, occasionally hiding behind puffs of clouds. I skipped the touristy Nusa Dua and headed far down south to the secluded Padang Padang, an oasis of calm water shaded by soaring cliffs. The 330-foot-long stretch of golden sand is accessible down a flight of stairs through a unique hollow rock entrance. I remembered the idyllic setting from Hollywood's *Eat, Pray, Love* mega-flick, where grey long-tailed macaques played around the stairs on the Balinese *gapura* gate and high up in the acacia trees. I parked myself at the beach, sporadically taking a swim in the deep blue waters, watching surfers ride the tide in the distance.

None of this, however, captures the spirituality that mantles Bali. I got a

Nasi goreng (top)**, an egg-topped Indonesian staple, is relished at local eateries; Culture infuses with Bali's traditional setting, where *penjors*** (bottom left) **are erected outside houses; Ubud is home to macaques** (bottom right) **at the famous Sacred Monkey Forest Sanctuary.**

KATE HIGGS/SHUTTERSTOCK (FOOD), SIMONLONG/MOMENT/GETTY IMAGES (VILLAGE), EDMUND LOWE PHOTOGRAPHY/MOMENT/GETTY IMAGES (MONKEY)

taste of it in Ubud, an hour-and-a-half's cab ride north of Kuta. Branches of banyan trees hug ostentatiously carved archways, temples dot the roads and a stream warbles under moss-coated bridges. More modern facades have sprung up, with museums and arty cafés dotting the topography. This is a place where traditional Balinese culture inspires every waking moment, where a *penjor*—an ornamented bamboo pole that vaults up above roof level, its end weighed down with offerings—is erected outside every house. The soothing tune of gamelan is the background score to everyday life.

What it lacks in beaches, Ubud compensates with waterfalls and forests. Kanto Lampo waterfall in Gianyar village is easy to get to and fairly tourist-free. Sunlight filters through a dense canopy of trees and settles over the rock-topped 33-foot waterfall, forming a semi-rainbow.

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"When I clamber over the rocks, you hit record." Knee-deep in cold water, Hannes directs me in a thick accent whilst handing over his GoPro. Having met earlier at the hostel, the German gap year student backpacking through Asia became my travel companion for the next two days. Slapping on sunscreen, we set out on a rental scooter in Bali's scorching heat, flickering past green, gradient rice paddies.

We temple-hopped in a time warp-like journey. We passed through the portal of the 11th-century Pura Gunung Kawi, a collection of 10 *candi* (shrines) cut out of rock faces, all believed to have been carved in one night, before capering to the purification ritual in holy waters of the 10th-century Tirta Empul. The Hindu temples of Bali resemble no other in the world.

Bali is an unbashed cliché—a harmonious paradox of cultural rawness and over-cooked tourists

Wandering through the 27-acre Sacred Monkey Forest Sanctuary is like walking into a folkloric jungle. Some 700 Balinese long-tailed macaques live here amidst the verdure—some vying to snatch gadgets and food from unassuming visitors, others impassive to human encounters. There isn't much to do here, but that's part of the charm.

On my final evening, we headed to the Instagram-famous Tegalalang Rice Terrace. *Subak*, traditional Balinese cooperative irrigation systems, punctuated the stepped valley. The rice field crackles under a drizzle. Drones fly overhead and cameras shutter to capture the landscape. As for me, I put my phone away at one of the most photogenic locations in the world. Pink skies and warm company were better enjoyed in the absence of technology.

ANDRAS JANCSIK/MOMENT/GETTY IMAGES

A walk through the Tegalalang Rice Terrace reveals expansive views of gradient green rice paddies at the UNESCO World Heritage Site.

BEST LIST: THE FABULOUS FLAVOURS OF DUBAI

SPICE-LADEN SOUKS, GOLD-DUSTED CAPPUCCINOS, JUICY CAMEL BURGERS—THERE IS MUCH MORE TO THE EMIRATE'S FOOD SCENE THAN CELEBRITY RESTAURANTS **BY SONA BAHADUR**

Despite being one of the world's top travel destinations, Dubai's culinary attractions are often overlooked by gastro tourists. Here's a comprehensive list that celebrates the diverse food adventures that are up for the taking in the metropolis.

DISCOVER EMIRATI CUISINE

Rooted in the ancient food traditions of the Bedouins—the nomadic desert dwellers of the Arabian Peninsula—local Emirati food is Dubai's best-kept secret. Try classics like *machboos*, a rustic stew made of meat, rice and vegetables, and *harees*, a ghee-laden porridge of cracked wheat and meat, at **Al Fanar**, an Emirati restaurant. **Ayamna** at Atlantis, The Palm offers Lebanese and

Whether it is a meaty preparation of spiced lamb rice or a generous serving of cardamom-flavoured qahwa (in photo), Emirati cuisine is full of fragrant surprises.

BLAINE HARRINGTON III/ALAMY/INDIAPICTURE

Emirati dishes over a traditional belly dancing show. Dig into a plate of shrimp *kunafa*, made of deep fried zaatar prawns wrapped with kunafa dough, or try the lamb *ouzi*, or puff pastry stuffed with spiced lamb rice, and mixed kebab grill for mains.

SHOP FOR ARABIC SPICES AND BLENDS

In the old city, the Dubai spice souk in **Deira** is as vibrant as it is flavorsome. Brace yourself for a sensory overload as you walk past mountains of herbs and spices spilling from large baskets at every turn. Here, masalas are sold both by weight and in packets. Vendors expect you to haggle as you contemplate the vast selection of whole nuts, dates, oils, fragrances (including the famous *oud*) and teas on offer. Though saffron from Iran rules the souk, the many exotic Arabic spice blends are worth looking out for. Buy some *bzar*, the Arabic version of garam masala, and *loomi*, those dehydrated black lemons that impart a citrusy twang to just about anything.

GO ON A LOCAL FOOD WALK

If you wish to truly immerse yourself in Dubai's authentic flavours, book a four-hour walking food-and-culture tour with **Frying Pan Adventures**. All about hidden gems and good storytelling, these curated tours show you what old-timers would vouch for in the less touristy parts of the city. Options include Dubai souks and creekside food walk, Emirati cooking session and lunch, ME food pilgrimage and Little India on a Plate. Interactive cooking demos and experiential meals with the local Sufra community are among the highlights.

GET A WHIFF OF COFFEE CULTURE

Qahwa or Emirati coffee, which reflects the cherished hospitality rituals of the Bedouins, is a quintessential Dubai experience. The cardamom-flavoured brew, poured from *dallah*, a traditional coffee pot, is best enjoyed at a local's home. Or try it at Café Bateel, where it arrives with a plate of dates. Tucked away in **Al Fahidi** village, Dubai's Coffee Museum devotes several rooms to artifacts of coffee making and consumption. The ground floor showcases the traditions of different coffee drinking cultures, while upstairs are texts related to coffee from the 18th century to the present day.

The buffet at Lido (top) **on board *Queen Elizabeth 2* offers mesmerising views of the ocean; Whole-grilled hamour** (bottom left)**, or orange-spotted grouper, is the fish of choice across the U.A.E.; Shrimp kunafa** (bottom right)**, is sought after at Ayamma in Atlantis, The Palm.**

PHOTO COURTESY: QUEEN ELIZABETH 2 (BUFFET), ELENA BARSTAD/SHUTTERSTOCK (FISH), PHOTO COURTESY: ATLANTIS, THE PALM (SHRIMP)

SIP ON GOLD CAPPUCCINO

While on the subject of caffeine, don't pass up the opportunity to quaff a gold-flavoured coffee in the city of bling. Dubai's famous **Burj Al Arab**, one of the swankiest hotels in the world, flaunts the Ultimate Gold Cappuccino sprinkled with 24-carat gold flakes. Served at its **Sahn Eddar lounge**, located within the hotel's atrium, the coffee is made using 100 per cent Arabica beans, mixed with foamed milk, which is then blended with 24-carat gold. **Armani Hotel Dubai** located in Burj Khalifa also serves a gold cappuccino adorned with 23-carat gold flakes, as does **Mocca Art Cafe** located in downtown, in the Souq Al Manzil market area.

GORGE ON FRESH SEAFOOD

The local food scene stands apart with stellar seafood. Order the grilled whole version of Hamour, or orange-spotted grouper, at **Wafi Gourmet**. For a posh dining experience, head to **Rockfish** at Jumeirah Al Naseem. The marine-themed restaurant opens out to a terraced deck, with views of the Arabian Gulf. Order their famed crudo platter—an assortment of Tasmanian

The Dubai Spice Souk (top) **is known for spices, herbs and perfumes; Tender and juicy, camel burgers** (bottom) **are a delicacy in the city.**

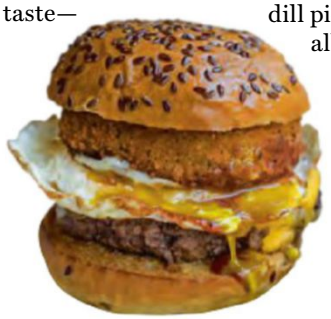
salmon, yellow fin tuna and sea bass—along with a Mediterranean garden salad, and tomato tartar and seared prawns. For mains, opt for buckets of mussels and clams, or the seafood mixed grill.

DINE ON BOARD THE HISTORIC QE2

The iconic ***Queen Elizabeth 2***, which circumnavigated the globe 25 times, has hosted the likes of Nelson Mandela and David Bowie during its heyday. Now enjoying its second innings as one of Dubai's most popular venues for dining and nightlife, the former cruise liner is a gastronome's delight. The buffet at Lido, which offers a mesmerizing view of the ocean and Dubai's iconic skyline, boasts a wide range of international fares with a focus on Indian specialties. Tuck into their British roast section featuring traditional roast beef, jacket potatoes and Yorkshire pudding. The Arabic chef makes killer shawarma using his special recipe—it takes over 30 hours to make. But if you're hungering for a taste of the ship's past, the Queens Grill menu serves a nine-course tasting meal from the ship's maiden voyage in 1969.

INDULGE IN A LOTUS COOKIE DESSERT (OR TWO)

The Lotus cookie trend in the UAE continues unabated. *Speculoos*, the spiced shortcrust biscuits were historically served on December 5 and 6 to celebrate St Nicholas' Day. Today the Belgian import has transcended its traditional origins to become a modern dessert sensation across the Middle East thanks to its unique taste—a fusion of gingerbread, caramel and spices. Dubai spoils you with its Lotus options such asthe Lotus Mess at **Switch**, or the dreamy Lotus softie at **Salt**, the popular Kite Beach food truck. The showstopper, however, was the Lotus pancakes at **Cocoa Room**, which comes with scoops of ice cream, fresh berries and chocolate sauce.



EAT A CAMEL BURGER

Burgers, steaks, dessert –try the best camel meat and milk treats while in Dubai. Tough in texture, it is only in recent times that the meat has seen a spurt in the popularity parceled as camel burgers. Try them at **Switch** or at **The Local House**. **Bareburger**, a popular organic food truck, nails it with its consciously sourced camel meat, aged cheddar, fried egg, onions, dill pickle and habanero mayo, all stuffed within a brioche bun. Still hungry? Tuck into camel tenderloin at **Siraj**, or camel pizza at **Ducati Café**. If meat is not your thing, treat yourself to a decadent camel milk gelato at **Treej Café**.

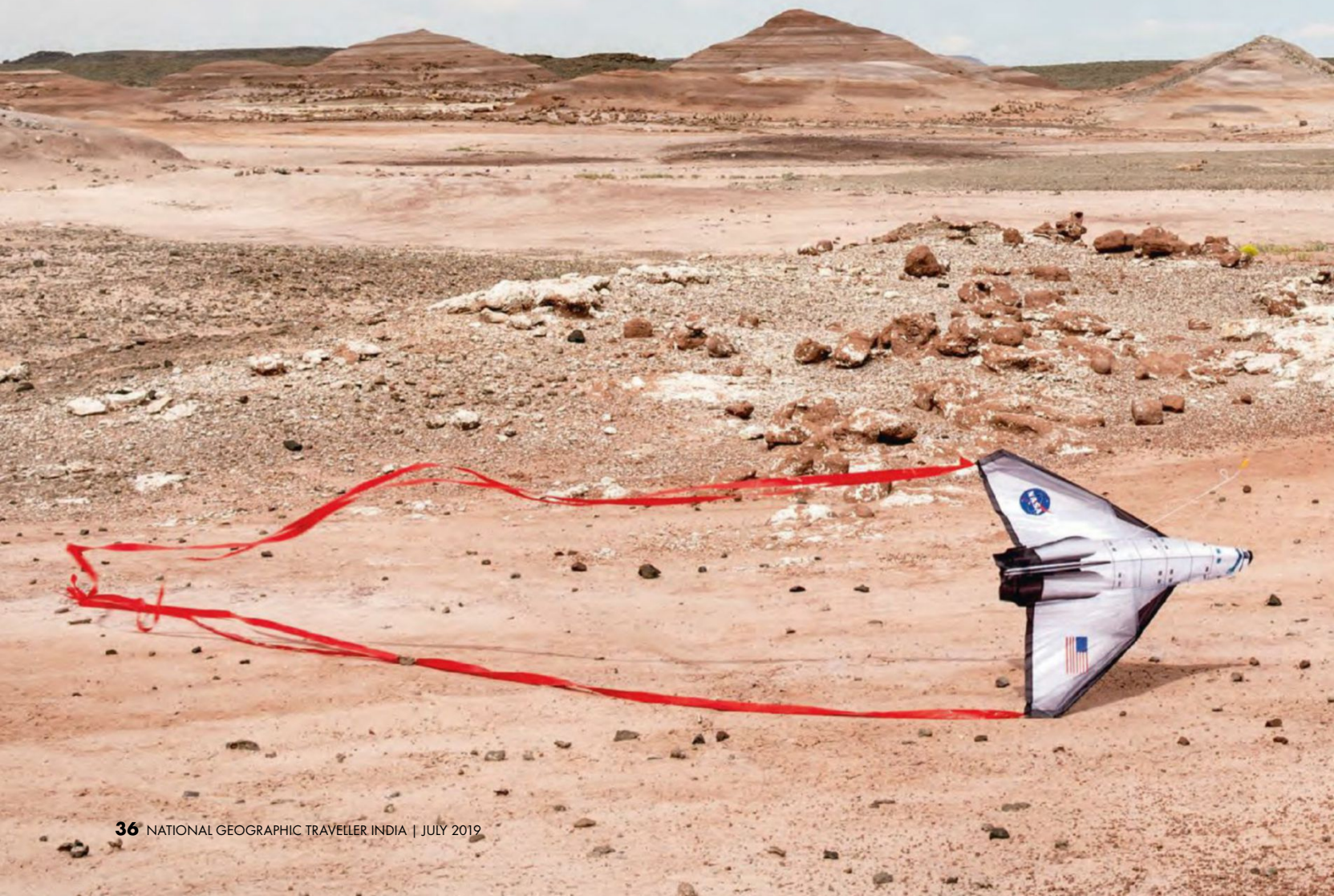
WAEL HAMDAN/AGEFOTOSTOCK/DINODIA PHOTO LIBRARY (SHOP), PHOTO COURTESY: BAREBURGER (BURGER)

OTHERWORLDLY DESTINATIONS

SPOTS TO VISIT HERE ON EARTH IF YOU DREAM OF TRAVELLING TO SPACE

Richard Branson's Virgin Galactic has launched a vessel that reached the edge of space. Elon Musk's rocket company, SpaceX, wants to ferry people to Mars by the hundreds, with an ambitious goal of landing the first humans on the red planet around 2025. With July 20 of this year marking the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 moonwalk, all eyes are focused on the skies. National Geographic, too, has been celebrating the cosmos over the past year; see *nationalgeographic.com/starstruck*. It's enough to give Earthlings a serious case of interplanetary wanderlust, but you can't book your tickets just yet. For aspiring space tourists eager for a celestial experience, we offer some terrestrial places with a distinctively off-planet flavour.

—Brad Scriber



PLACES WE LOVE
UTAH

1. ON THE GROUND

The red desert landscape of southern Utah mimics the isolation, geology, and palette of our planetary neighbour Mars. A hike through this region reveals deep red canyons, buttes, and pinnacles. Ignore the succulents and you can imagine yourself trekking in the Valles Marineris, Mars's version of the Grand Canyon. Rainbow Bridge National Monument, in this part of the state, is a spectacular, 290-foot-tall natural arch made of red-brown Navajo and Kayenta sandstone. The region is also home to the Mars Desert Research Station, a two-storey stand-in for a potential Martian research station, complete with simulated air locks. More than 1,200 people have participated in two-to-three-week missions at the station since 2001. The Mars Society, which advocates for sending humans to Mars as soon as possible, regularly recruits volunteers for future mission simulations.

EXPLORE MORE

Kennedy Space Center Merritt Island, Florida

At the legendary site of the Apollo 11 liftoff, visitors can see the launch pads, meet an astronaut, and join the Astronaut Training Experience, which mimics a mission to Mars with launching, landing, and space walking. Kennedy. *spacecenter.com*

At the Mars Desert Research Station near Hanksville, Utah, a crew member contends with gravity during a simulated space walk.

©CASSANDRA KLOS

PLACES WE LOVE CAPPADOCIA

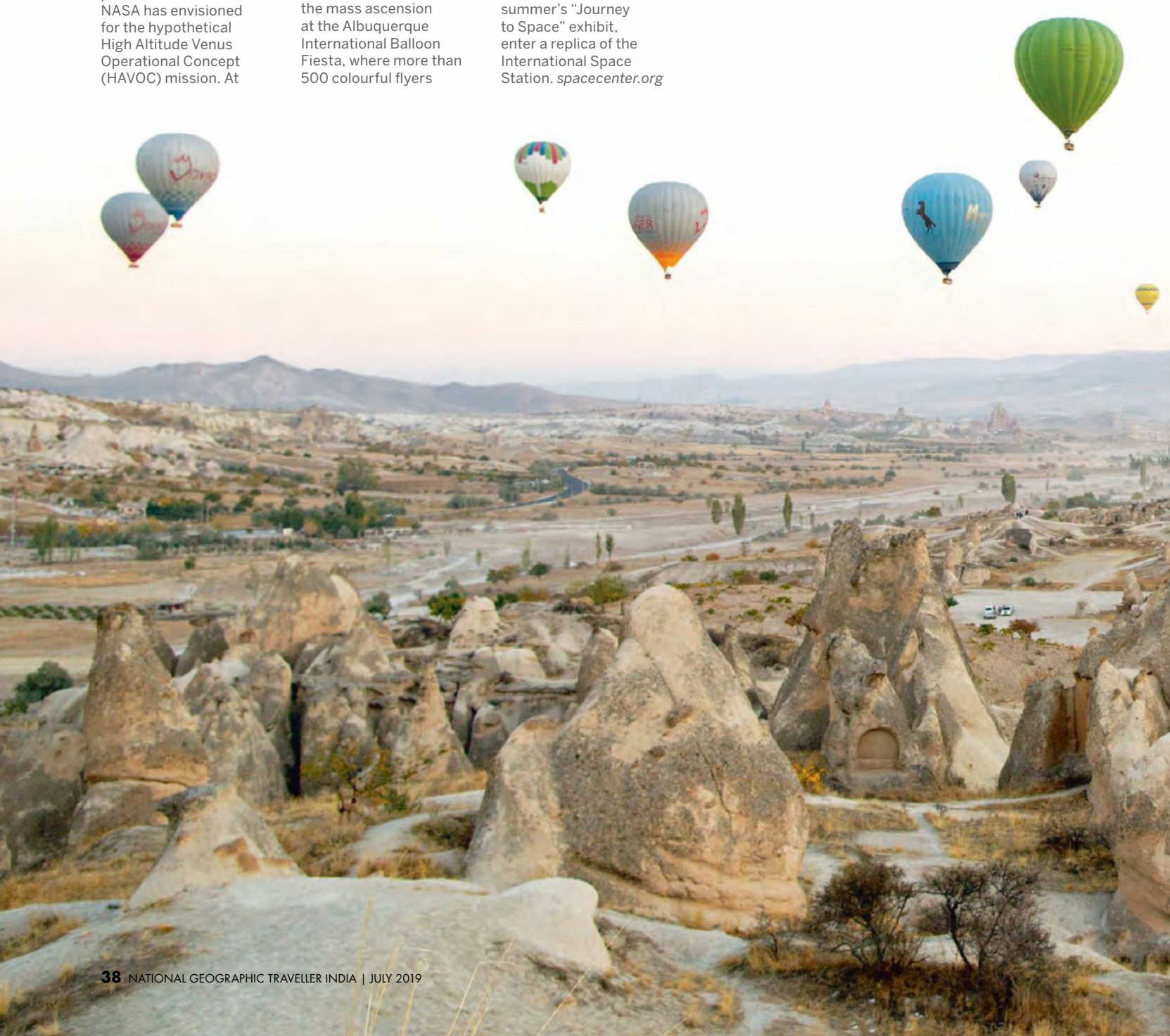
2. IN THE AIR

If humans ever make it to Venus, they will likely have trouble landing on its volcanic surface, shrouded in clouds that rain sulphuric acid and bake the crust to some 471° Celsius. Instead, visitors might one day float above the ground in the solar-powered cloud cities NASA has envisioned for the hypothetical High Altitude Venus Operational Concept (HAVOC) mission. At that higher altitude, temperatures and other conditions would be less hostile. For the sensation of a vacation to Venus, head to Cappadocia, Turkey, where the alien-looking landscape of fantastical rock formations is best seen from above, on a hot-air balloon tour. In New Mexico, check out the mass ascension at the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, where more than 500 colourful flyers launch in a rapid-fire spectacle. This premier ballooning event lasts for nine days in October.

EXPLORE MORE

Space Center Houston
Houston, Texas

Tour the NASA Mission Control Center that monitored the moon landing, and in this summer's "Journey to Space" exhibit, enter a replica of the International Space Station. *spacecenter.org*



Nearly every day at sunrise, hot-air balloons ascend into the skies over Cappadocia, Turkey.

POLINA NAGAREVA

3. FROM THE EDGE

One of the most heavily cratered objects in our solar system is Jupiter's moon Callisto, discovered by Galileo in the 17th century. Valhalla, a crater on this moon's surface named for the home of fallen warriors in Norse mythology, is the largest at roughly 4,023 kilometres in diametre. Unlike Callisto, Earth is shielded from space rocks by its atmosphere but has nonetheless had its share of impacts. If you want the feeling of standing inside the rim of Valhalla, you can visit some of the 190 confirmed craters on our planet created by meteorites. The largest is Vredefort crater, a rumpled ring of mountains in South Africa some 160 kilometres across. You can also check out the smaller, younger, and more intact Pingualuit crater, which rises from the tundra in northern Quebec. An early prospector mistakenly believed that the almost perfectly round feature was a kimberlite pipe where he might find diamonds. Those who trek out to Pingualuit today will instead find the "crystal eye of Nunavik," a deep freshwater lake filled with extraordinarily clear water. A different sort of lake, one that's shallow and salty, marks the centre of the Acraman crater, located in the Gawler Ranges of remote, arid South Australia.

EXPLORE MORE

Lowell Observatory
Flagstaff, Arizona
As part of their prep for the moon landing, Apollo astronauts visited this site where Pluto was discovered in 1930. Take a look through the Clark Refractor telescope, which has been used to study moons, planets, and comets. This year the Giovale Open Deck Observatory debuts.
lowell.edu

A satellite image uses false colour to highlight the lake at the centre of South Australia's Acraman crater.

USGS/NASA LANDSAT DATA/ORBITAL HORIZON/GALLO IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES

18+

WHAT IS AVAXHOME?

AVAXHOME-

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Sun Moon Lake sees millions of visitors each year from across the globe, all eager to drink in its beauty.

RICHIE CHAN/SHUTTERSTOCK

FLY ME TO THE SUN AND MOON

AT THE FOOTHILLS OF TAIWAN'S CENTRAL MOUNTAIN RANGE LIES A RELAXING AND BEAUTIFUL PIT STOP

BY SEJAL MEHTA

The name of Taiwan's Sun Moon Lake—half shaped like the sun, the other half curved like a crescent moon—implies a good backstory.

A variety of folklore tales each differently explain how the largest freshwater lake in Taiwan came to be so auspiciously shaped, one even citing mischievous dragons. However, the alpine lake was actually two separate bodies of water that were joined in the 1930s when Japanese occupiers decided to build a dam, merging the round sun and the crescent moon together. Dotting the centre of this union lies Lalu Island, meaning 'later' or 'after' in the region's indigienous tribal tongue.

The idyllic isle has changed names and even its shape under its various rulers and timelines: 'Jade Island' under the Japanese, 'Kuang hua' under the Chiang Kai Shek's Nationalist government, and now, a return to its original name, Lalu, out of respect for the local Thao tribe. Throughout the 1800s, some Thao even lived on it, before they were ousted by Chinese settlers. It took almost a century for their ancestral home to be returned to them, which only happened after an earthquake in 1999 shrunk a considerable portion of the island, spurring the local government to return what land remained on the lake to its original inhabitants. From the number of boats that idle around the now-protected islet, encircled by pontoon gardens, it seems everybody likes a good backstory.

Two hours from Taichung, this tranquil lake at the foothills of Taiwan's central mountain range, in Nantou County, is a restful pit stop made up of forest trails (some filled with fireflies), mountain hikes and a highly acclaimed 34-kilometre cycling track that loops the lake.

The track is so popular it is common for people to carry their own bikes and make a trip purely for the three-hour experience. On the ride, bikers pedal past thick forested areas along the blue-green hues of the water (spring visitors will also ride past cherry blossoms). The natural beauty of the area is also

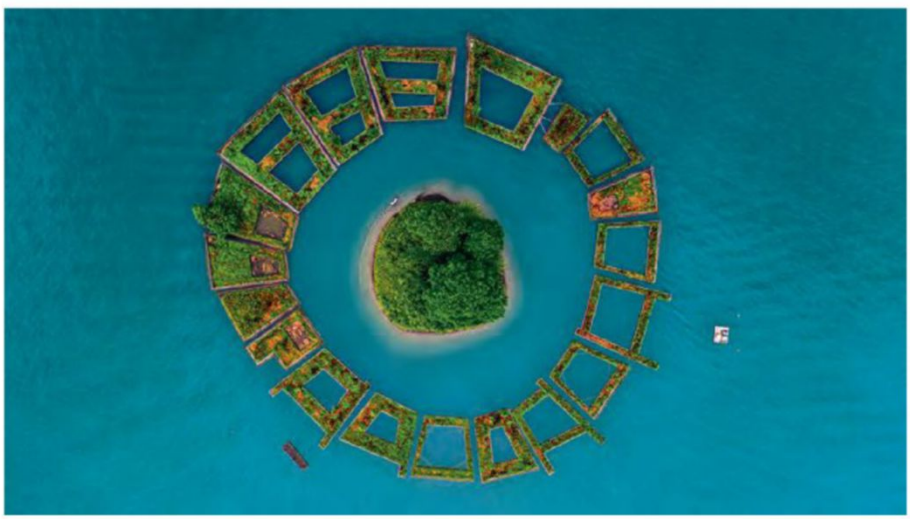
accessible from several vantage points. The Ropeway Cable Car service, which leads to the Formosa Aboriginal Village, reveals more than just stunning views from above. The colours of the cable cars reflect the pastoral essence of the island—the red of the sun, yellow of the moon, green of the trees and blue of the lake. The Wenwu Temple also boasts gorgeous vistas of the lake; however, the views can't compete with the up-close-and-personal experience of boating or riding around the azure water.

The passage of 366 steps, beginning at a lakeside pier and leading up to the temple, is named Year of the Steps, each step corresponding to a day in the year, the extra number denoting a leap year. These days alternate routes exist, but visitors often still climb up and down the passage to see their birthday step as well as the historical character depicted on it. A bit of a fun to-do unless your birthday is in December and you have to climb down to the bottom and wheeze back up to the top.

On the ride, bikers pedal past thick forested areas along the blue-green hues of the water

While some travellers choose to do this journey as a day trip, those interested in getting to know the place a bit better might need a two-day sojourn. During that extra time Formosa Village promises to be a worthwhile destination for a spot of Taiwanese history. A man-made recreation of an aboriginal village, it offers glimpses into past indigenous life via a replica-constructed space that was originally used by tribes as hunting grounds.

The region was home to the Thao tribe (which still lives in certain parts of the territory), one of the nine Taiwanese tribes that occupied the area. Around 300 years ago, before Chinese immigrants arrived in Taiwan, the indigenous people of the island were distributed throughout its territory. While they may now be completely Sinicised (made Chinese in character), early scholars classified the tribes in their natural element. Today's indigenous people are classified into 14 main groups, one being the Thao.



It takes roughly two hours to cycle around the circumference of the Sun Moon Lake (top); **The original name of Wenwu Temple's** (middle) **Year of Steps was Stairway to Heaven; Taiwan's indigenous Thao tribe still uses Lalu Island** (bottom) **to initiate its priestesses.**

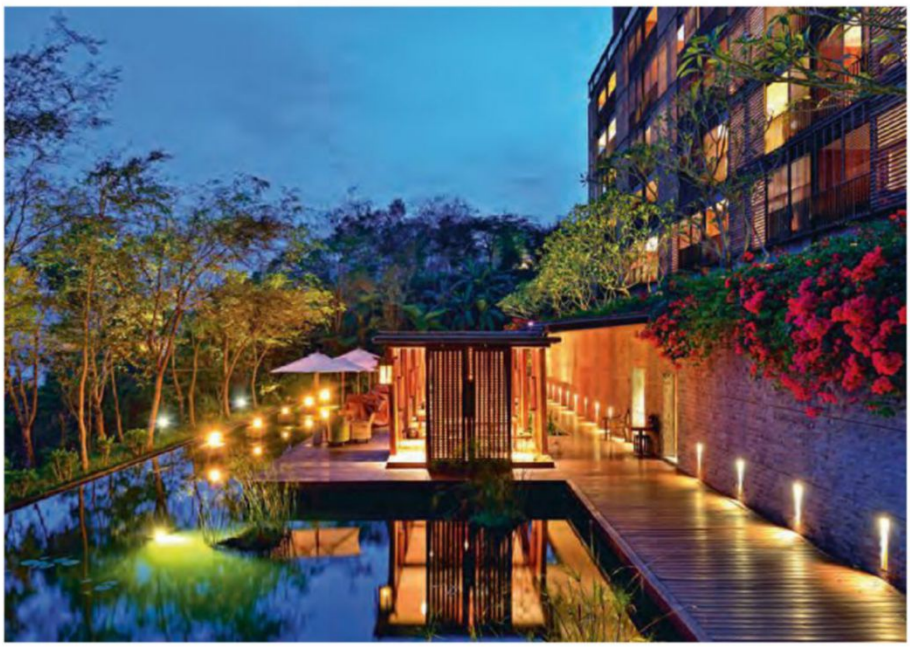
TPG/TOP PHOTO GROUP RF/DINODIA PHOTO LIBRARY (BRIDGE), CHAYUTI/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES (TEMPLE), AVIGATORPHOTOGRAPHER/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES (ISLAND)

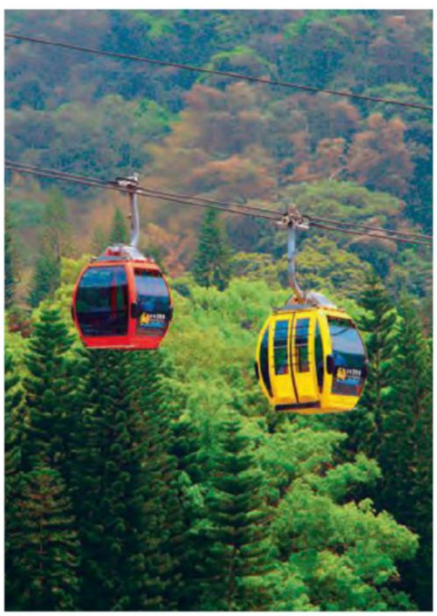
According to a survey in 2011, only around 700 individuals of the Thao tribe remain today. They live in communities around Sun Moon Lake in central Taiwan, more so in the regions of Toushe and Pu-chi. In the 1800s, the Thao laid claim over the Sun Moon Lake area, and set up a functioning life until Chinese settlers started to arrive in the 19th century and later under the Japanese rule in 1934. Today, the people depend on agriculture (also having learnt the cultivation of rice in paddy fields from the Chinese), fishing, and hunting. Staple crops include rice, sweet potatoes, millet, peanuts, and maize.

The village is a significant walk (put aside a couple of hours) with homes constructed in the traditional style and rituals portrayed by life-size figures in traditional outfits. The placards around the village offer information about the patrilineal society and clan customs, complete with a headman's house. Small stories about customs and rites of passage play out in these installations, such as, a skull collection of enemies and learning the art of war. The importance of hunting reveals itself in the skulls and bones displayed on the walls of the huts.

Legends also play an important role in this society. Lalu Island was apparently revealed to the Thao tribe by a white deer, who led them to a place that was both beautiful and abundant in natural resources (watch out for the statue of the deer if you happen to take a boat ride around the island). If you walk around the sleek Xiangshan Visitor Centre and the streets next to the piers, owl motifs can be seen everywhere—wooden carvings in Formosa and souvenir shops selling them on nearly everything. The Thao's folklore carries a rather sad story. A girl from the tribe became pregnant before she was married. She was ostracised and in the face of no forgiveness, she ran away on a stormy night only to be found dead under a tree after a few days. An owl was perched on the tree, and it is said that since then, an owl would fly over homes of pregnant women, as a reminder to treat them better.

The Sun Moon Lake legends make for good storytelling, and frequently one's pace turns into an idyllic stroll, before packing up and returning to the dazzling tempo of Taiwan's bigger cities.★





Japanese Crown Prince Hirohito once called the original Lalu property (top) **his official residence; Sun Moon Lake Ropeway** (bottom left) **connects Formosa Village to the base of the lake; A replica of a Thao chicken coop** (bottom right) **demonstrates the tribe's craftsmanship.**

ESSENTIALS

Getting There

Flights from Indian hubs to Taipei typically involve a layover in Bangkok or Hong Kong. Take the HSR (High-Speed Rail) from Taipei Main Station to Taichung HSR Station, which typically takes an hour. From Taichung HSR Station buses depart to Sun Moon Lake every 15 minutes *(80 km/1.5 hr)*.

Pro Tip

If you're in the mood to lap up luxury, nestled next to the shoreline stands the magnificent Lalu Hotel, the once-summer home of Chiang Kai-shek (*www.thelalu.com.tw; doubles from USD15,200/₹10,52,000*)

PHOTO COURTESY: TAIWAN TOURISM BUREAU (HOTEL), TOP PHOTO GROUP RF/DINODIA PHOTO LIBRARY (ROPEWAY), SEJAL MEHTA (COOP)

THE DESTINATION

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THE BEATLES
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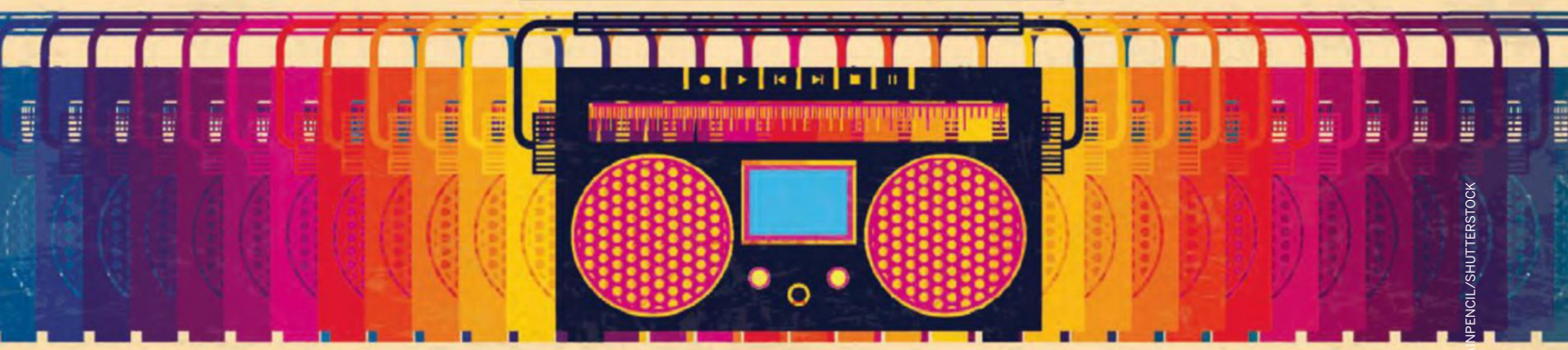


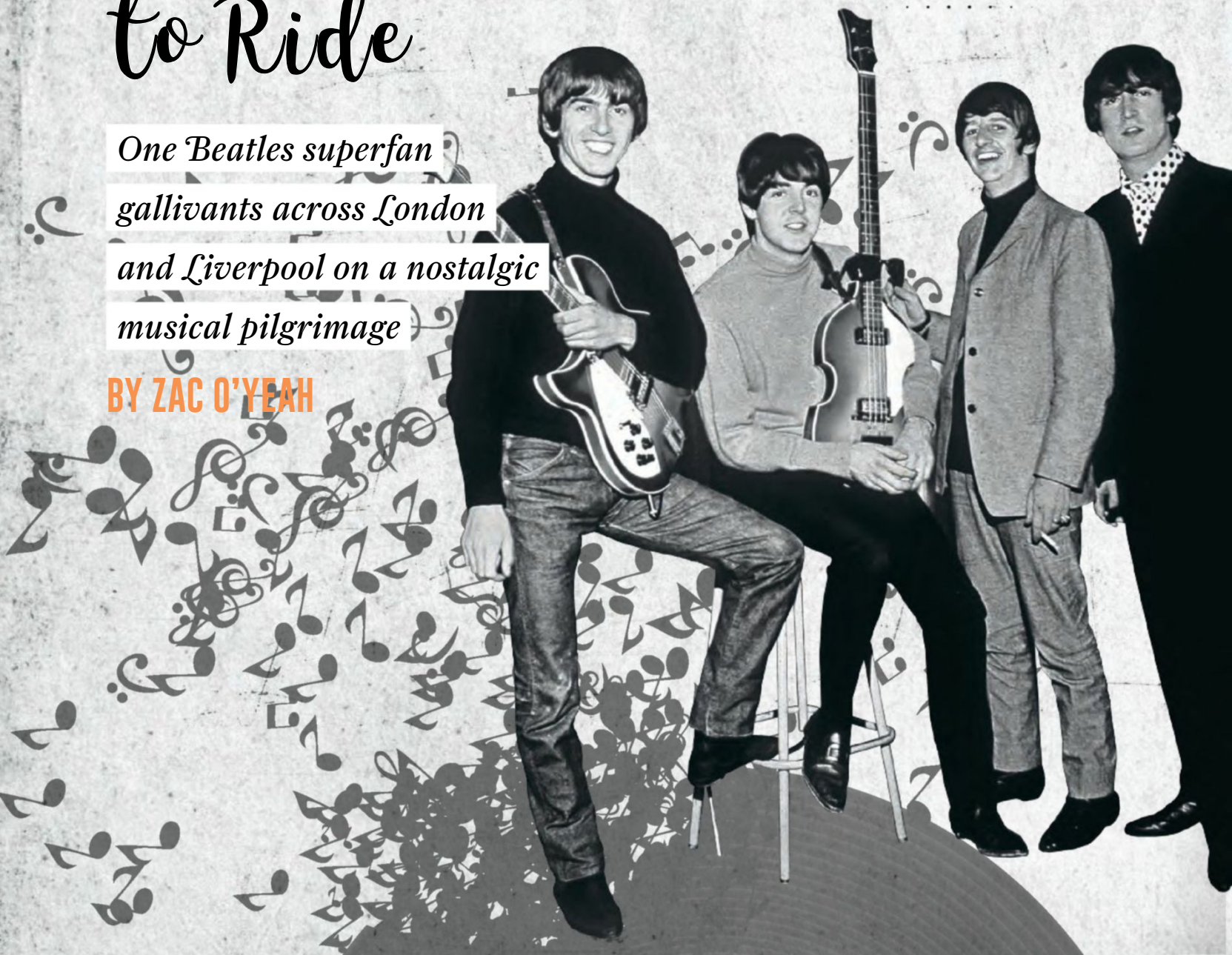
BRAINPENCIL/SHUTTERSTOCK

MUSIC

He's Got A TICKET to Ride

One Beatles superfan gallivants across London and Liverpool on a nostalgic musical pilgrimage

BY ZAC O'YEAH



The Beatles' concert (left) in Stockholm on October 24, 1963, is considered by many to be their best live show; The band was paid £5 for their first show at The Cavern Club (right).

The epiphany that I was a Beatles fan came in my early teens, and it was like experiencing one's first heady taste of ale—I just knew this was something special. Considering I was born three weeks after the release of *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*—the album that changed the sound of pop music—and three weeks before the launch of *All You Need Is Love*, it seems I was destined to be a diehard Beatles fan. Of course it helped that the music is so damn good.

When John Lennon was shot I wrote a condolence letter to his widow Yoko Ono, spending all my pocket money on the postage from Sweden to New York; a decade later Paul McCartney played nearby where I lived in Gothenburg, so I volunteered to work at the arena just to get a chance to say "Hello, Goodbye." When I travelled through India I always thought of George Harrison, a fellow Indophile like myself. I even heard a story from an old hippie in Goa who claimed to have partaken in a mountain of 'Colombian marching powder' with Ringo Starr. They became like my extended family. So, it followed that I should travel with them when I went on my first visit to England.

A DAY IN MY LIFE

Topmost on my agenda when I arrived in London was to take the underground to the neat and outlying Saint John's Wood. It isn't named after Lennon, but the station boasts a Beatles-inspired coffee shop, selling the essential 'I crossed Abbey Road' badge. About half a kilometre away sits the legendary **Abbey Road Studios** (3 Abbey Road) where The Beatles cut many hits, as did other supergroups from Pink Floyd and Queen to U2.

But I didn't see any pop star step out humming a hit, and truth be told it was a fairly anonymous dirty-white building, which was a bit of a let-down. However, the main draw was in front of the studios: to my knowledge, the only zebra-crossing that has been bestowed a heritage monument status. Once the tourists in front of me finished taking selfies, I tap-danced across like a Beatle gone solo, dodging cars in the manner of a second-rate bullfighter, realising it would've been better to come on a Sunday when London nurses its collective hangover.

Afterwards, I took the tube to Baker Street and headed to London's main Beatles souvenir shop—advertising its opening hours as "Eight Days a Week." Incidentally, in the late 1960s The Beatles themselves ran their own trendy, yet short-lived, Apple Store at 94 Baker Street when they diversified into design, but the venture was a commercial failure.

MY MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR

My next destination was the **Marylebone station** around

NORIOKANISAWA / ISTOCK / GETTY IMAGES (MAP BACKGROUND), WERNER OTTO / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO / INDIAPICTURE (PEOPLE), ILBUSCA / ISTOCK UNRELEASED (CLUB)
FACING PAGE: AVA BITTER / SHUTTERSTOCK (TYPEWRITER), CUBE29 / SHUTTERSTOCK (PAINT BRUSH), PEACEFULLY77 / ISTOCK / GETTY IMAGES (TV & CLAPBOARD),
DAVOODA / SHUTTERSTOCK (DISC & FORK AND KNIFE), ALBUM ONLINE / INDIAPICTURE (THE BEATLES), BERM_TEERAWAT / SHUTTERSTOCK (CUP), PICTURELAKE / ISTOCK
UNRELEASED / GETTY IMAGES (STAMP), OLEGGANKO / SHUTTERSTOCK (MUSIC NODES)

"Our engineer Geoff Emerick always used to smoke cigarettes called Everest, so the album was going to be called Everest...Then one day I said, 'I've got it! ...Abbey Road!' It's the studio we're in, which is fabulous, and it sounds a bit like a monastery." —Sir Paul McCartney

MADZIA71/ ISTOCK UNRELEASED/ GETTY IMAGES

This mural by artist Mr. Brainwash has since been painted over (right); Facing page: The iconic *Abbey Road* album was supposed to be titled *Everest*, featuring a shot of the band and the mountain, but The Beatles were too lazy for a photo-op in Nepal.

VLADISLAVGAJIC/DEPOSITEPHOTOS/INDIAPICTURE

the corner from Baker Street, which features in the opening sequence of the 1964 movie, *A Hard Day's Night*; it was also where Liverpool trains terminated, making it The Beatles' entry point to London. As I walked about, I got the feeling that almost every other building had something to do with them. Not far from the station, Starr rented an apartment at **34 Montagu Square**, where Yoko Ono and Lennon lived one summer. The blue heritage placard sits high up on the wall so that no souvenir-hunter can nick the marker of the abode where the nude cover photo for Lennon's first solo album *Two Virgins* (1968) was shot.

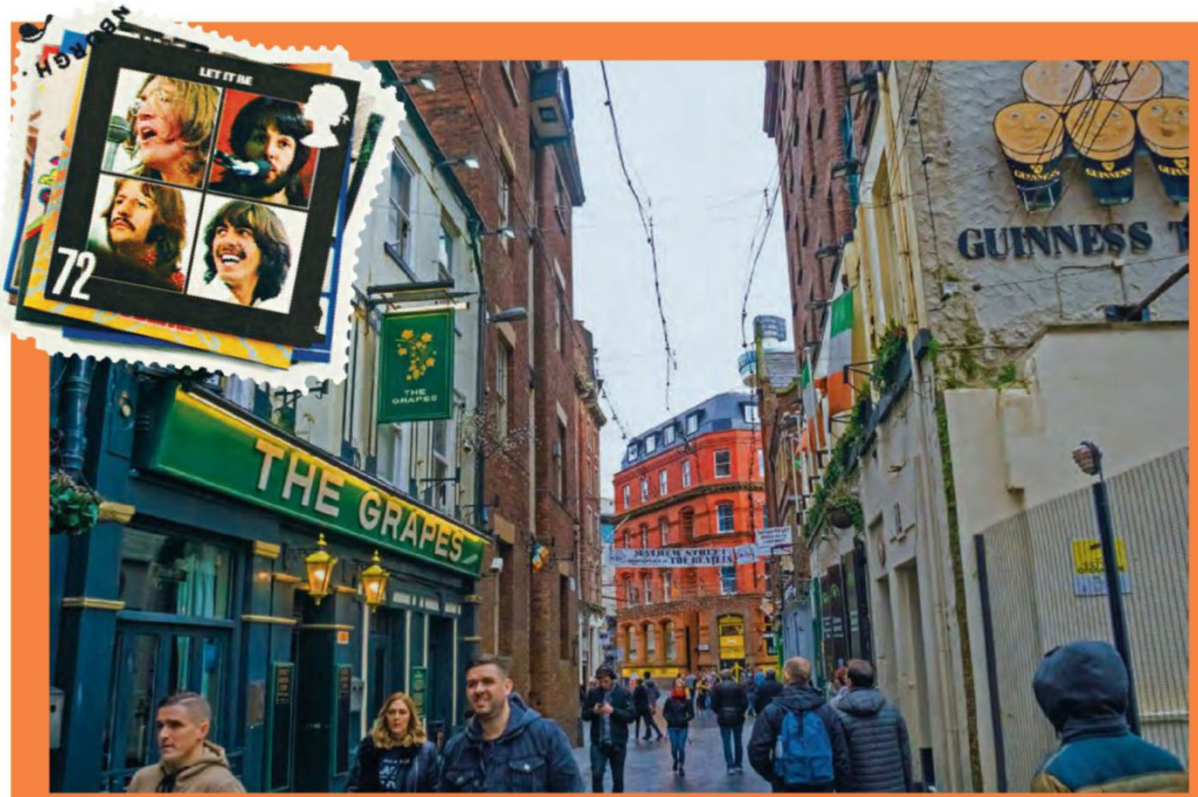
The headquarters of Apple Records, the label they started at **3 Savile Row**, is long gone, yet I wasn't the only fan gawking at the rooftop. It was there the concert movie *Let It Be* was canned during The Beatles' last public performance on a cold January day in 1969. A spectacle that irritated neighbours so much that they called the bobbies, who, as can be seen in the film, ended the historical event unceremoniously. But at least they won an Academy Award for best original soundtrack!

While both Lennon and Harrison have moved on to the big studio in the sky, one might spot Sir McCartney outside his offices in **Soho Square**. It's a discreet building but keep an eye out for the 'mpl' over the glass doors (McCartney Productions Limited), the company that holds his copyrights. I also sauntered past **7 Cavendish Avenue**, where Macca has lived since the 1960s, with high hopes he might step out for a quick puff of his once-preferred herb. And, of course, I tracked down the address where actress Jane Asher used to live, whom McCartney dated before marrying Linda Eastman. Once when he slept over at her place on **57 Wimpole Street**, he woke up ravenous and came up with a song called *Scrambled Eggs*. The melody was great but lyrics sucked, so he rewrote it as *Yesterday*—which remains one of the most covered songs in the world.

I didn't have time to go to the **British Library** where Lennon's handwritten lyrics for *Strawberry Fields Forever* are on display, nor the rock'n'roll museum at the Old Park Lane branch of **Hard Rock Café** that preserves Lennon's specs—Liverpool beckoned. As I squinted out at the foggy British landscape from the coach window, I thought back on my years of Beatlemania.

MY LONG AND WINDING ROAD

One of its most extreme moments was in Athens, Greece, where I found the band's sandal maker near **Monastiraki Square** and bought exactly the same footwear that Lennon had (I even wore them as I wrote this piece). On my first trip to India in the early 1990s, I immediately checked out the **Rikhi Ram & Sons** shop at Connaught Place, Delhi, where Harrison



To this day there are still bidding wars over Beatles' postage stamps (inset)**; At The Grapes fans can still pregame like the Fab Four** (left). Facing page: **Lennon would gambol on the grounds of Strawberry Fields as a youngster** (top)**; The Beatles were one of the rare guest groups actually paid to go on *The Ed Sullivan Show*** (bottom left)**; While shooting *A Hard Day's Night* George Harrison accidentally fell down at Marylebone Station while being chased by fans, a scene kept in the film.**

bought a sitar, sarod, and tanpura to use on Beatles' recordings, before I headed to **Rishikesh** where they meditated in 1968. In Bombay, I snuck into the **Taj Mahal Palace** hotel where, in 1966, Harrison took sitar classes from Ravi Shankar. The hotel has since renamed his room 'The Ravi Shankar Suite,' though before I could get a peek inside the security promptly threw me out as I was dressed too much like the Beatles, hippie style. On that trip, Harrison also visited the actual Taj Mahal in Agra to click an iconic selfie—perhaps the world's first actual selfie.

On my maiden U.S. trip, later in the 1990s, I made sure to land at J.F.K. rather than Newark just because that was where the four first set their eight feet on American soil in 1964 and went on to hold a hilarious airport press conference. Their U.S. debut concert was at **Carnegie Hall**, followed by a TV broadcast from the Ed Sullivan theatre on 1697 Broadway, watched by one quarter of the American population (which poses the question, what on earth were the rest doing?). I certainly went to **Madison Square Garden** where Lennon performed live for the last time ever in 1974 together with Elton John. My NYC walk ended at **72nd Street**, at the corner of Central Park West, where he used to live in an apartment building amongst celebrity neighbours, such as, actress Lauren Bacall and composer Leonard Bernstein. It was right at the entrance that Lennon was shot down returning from a late-night studio session by a demented fan. A three-acre memorial garden called 'Strawberry Fields' pays tribute across the road in Central Park.

HERE, THERE AND IN LIVERPOOL

Happier days awaited in Liverpool, as I took a bus to the Woolton suburb riddled with places reminiscent of the Beatles. On 251 Menlove Avenue, I tracked down Lennon's childhood home, **Mendip's**—a 1930s semi-detached villa now owned by the U.K.'s National Trust. As a kid he would play guitar on the porch and amuse himself at the nearby **Strawberry Field** orphanage. The McCartney family home on 20 Forthlin Road is also managed by the trust. Other hotspots include **Penny Lane** and the parish church where Lennon-McCartney originally teamed up in 1957 (and where a woman named Eleanor Rigby lies buried).

I left the quiet neighbourhood and headed to where the pre-Beatlemania action actually happened—downtown Liverpool. The harbour town has certainly capitalised on its Beatles connection with **Magical Mystery bus tours** and the **Hard Day's Night Hotel**, and the laundry list went on to include a fancy replica of the **Cavern Club** (the original, where they used to be the house band was demolished long back).

I opted to down a pint at the not-so-glamorous **Jacaranda** (Slater Street) where they performed before their breakthrough—in the crammed basement there are murals painted by the The Beatles' original bassist Stuart Sutcliffe. One profile on the wall looked like Lennon's face. In fact, I drank at every pub with the slightest association with them: at **The Grapes** on Mathew Street they had pints before heading to the Cavern Club, **Ye Cracke** on Rice Street is where Lennon and Cynthia (his first wife-to-be) had their first date, **The Pilgrim** on Pilgrim Street is famous for some Beatle thing or the other, and **Philharmonic** (Hope Street) was the snazziest of their local hangouts.

These pubs, which seem to have remained unchanged throughout the ages, brought me closer to them than the official Beatlemania tourism industry did—the only drawback is that a diehard fan doing all the Beatles-pubs needs a bladder the size of Liverpool's harbour!

QUYNH ANH NGUYEN/MOMENT UNRELEASED/GETTY IMAGES (STREET), ANDYLID/ISTOCK EDITORIAL (STAMP)

AMY LAUGHINGHOUSE/ISTOCK EDITORIAL/GETTY IMAGES (STRAWBERRY FIELD), RICHARD LEVINE/ALAMY/INDIAPICTURE (STUDIO), MARTIN PHILPOTT / ALAMY/INDIAPICTURE (STATION)

TELEVISION

Dining like DON DRAPER

Storied NYC eateries where fans can make like one brooding ad exec from Mad Men

BY JULIAN MANNING

The Manhattan lunch crowd pulls up a chair at P.J.'s.

High up on Madison Avenue, the stomping grounds of Don Draper dripped with pop culture persuasion, from brutalist lamps to the high contrast, au courant adverts illustrated under their light. However, *Mad Men*—the timeless TV show about an ad man in 1960s America—garnered accolades by using more than just perfectly positioned props in studios. Manhattan modelled some of its most historic bars and restaurants for the show. These classic haunts, where whiskey-fuelled executives and midtown mistresses were wined and dined, became the signature of Draper & Co.'s retro mise en scène.

Across its seven seasons, these scenes made such an impact on me that I retired a lot of my previous distaste for NYC. My parents are New Yorkers, so 'nowhere else is like New York,' I was frequently told throughout my childhood. It often seemed they had a secret they weren't letting me in on. Unlike them, my childhood had been anchored partly in Texas and partly in Tamil Nadu. As a countrified kid who wanted to be half-John Wayne, half-Rajinikanth, I sensed I might never understand their love for this big city.

Then, in 2007, the show first aired. My father was instantly obsessed, and my mom would even glance up from

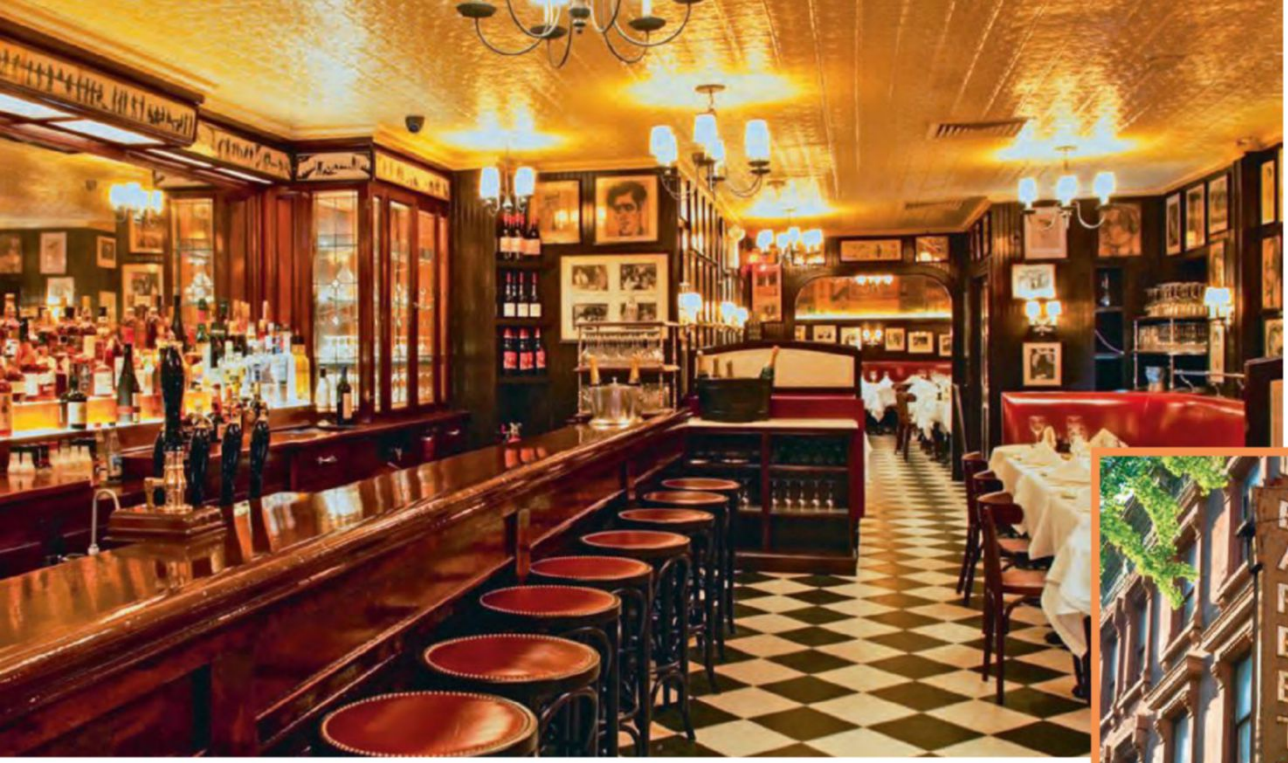
her book to smile at a familiar purlieu. As immaculately dressed people flitted from glittering bars to elaborate restaurants, my dad would jump out of his seat and exclaim to my mom, "You remember that place?" or to me, "Your Grandma used to love the Italian at that joint!" Even for a wannabe cowboy like myself, it was a struggle to hide my appreciation of the series, and not be captivated by the warm nostalgia that emanated from the TV screen.

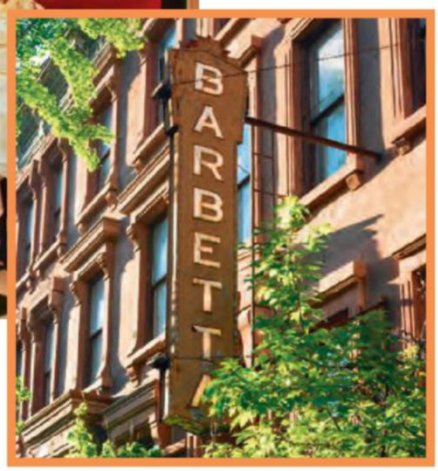
Before *Mad Men* released, my parents took me to NYC once as a kid, and, for some reason, I clung onto the memory of them grumbling about all the great places that were long gone. At the time, it seemed, to my angsty pubescent sensibilities at least, like I had been taken to a graveyard of glory, forced to mourn the absence of places I never had the chance to appreciate; yet through *Mad Men*, and the enthusiasm it inspired in my parents, I gradually began to understand NYC was not a bone-picked skeleton of the city it once was. You simply had to know exactly where to dig for treasure.

Don Draper might've said it best. "Change is neither good nor bad; it simply is." New York has changed a lot over the years, but like blots of burgundy wine left too long on white linen, the city hasn't been able to rub out these vestiges of a fine vintage, especially now that *Mad Men* has immortalised a handful of its steezy survivors. Since I've overcome the agita-ridden hurdles of growing up, NYC has become one of my favourite destinations, because as much as New Yorkers complain about the good ol' joints that bit the dust, they also support restaurants and bars that bookmark interesting chapters of the city's history.

Four of the most iconic Manhattan-based *Mad Men* locations are listed below. However, there are many more smattered across the city. My newfound love for classic NYC saloons has led me to quite a few reminiscent of the *Mad Men* milieu, be it for pints of light and dark ale at McSorley's, IPAs at the West Village's White Horse, and pale ales on Gramercy at Old Town Bar. Still, the *Mad Men* trail feels extra special, especially if you want to walk around town like a dapper Dan in an exquisitely tailored American suit.

KUMAR SRISKANDAN/ALAMY/INDIAPICTURE (RESTAURANT)
FACING PAGE: THE HOLLYWOOD ARCHIVE/DINODIA PHOTO LIBRARY (DON DRAPER). PHOTO COURTESY: AMC.COM (PEGGY).
VALERY BARETA/SHUTTERSTOCK (GLASS)





The iconic tin ceiling of Minetta Tavern (left) **glows, ancipating the supper crowd to arrive at 5.30 p.m.; Barbetta's** (right) **glittering sign beckons its many celebrity guests.**

P.J. Clarke's

Featured in The Hobo Code (Season 1, Episode 8)

The Sterling Cooper gang head to P.J.'s for an after-hours shindig, where Peggy sashays away to Chubby Checker's "The Twist" as her colleague Pete Campbell gives her a spine-chilling stare.

P.J. Clarke's opened in 1868 and started serving booze in 1884, predominantly to Irish immigrant labourers. Little did the owner know that his rusty, red brick building would survive the rapidly changing area of 55th Street and Third Avenue to become an anchor of old world charm, hiding in the shade of the steel skyscrapers that now make up Midtown Manhattan.

The laundry list of A-listers that regularly frequented P.J.'s over the years seems almost unfair, but then again, you must be doing something right if you have Frank Sinatra waiting around till last call on Table No. 20, Nat King Cole call your bacon cheeseburger "The Cadillac of burgers!" and Buddy Holly propose to receptionist Maria Elena Santiago in your bar, who (surprise, surprise) said yes.

Sardi's

Featured in The New Girl (Season 2, Episode 5)

Don drinks with his lady friend, Bobbie, at Sardi's, a soirée that ends with a bang when he crashes his car.

Originally known as The Little Room in 1921, its name changed to Sardi's with a move to 44th street in 1927. The place is now decked with hundreds of actors' caricatures on its walls, packed to the gills with tourists, and also serves a mean Shrimp Sardi and Spinach Cannoli. Dinner at this eatery is on many an aspiring and successful actors' bucket list.

Barbetta

Featured in The Summer Man (Season 4, Episode 8)

Don surprisingly turns down champagne over a dinner date with his young prospect, Bethany Van Nuys. In walks Don's ex-wife Betty with her new husband and, upon spotting her former spouse's companion, makes no secret of her icy disdain.

This opulent Italian restaurant on 46th Street claims it is the oldest restaurant in NYC that is still owned by the original founding family. To cover their many other laurels would take all day. The palatial eatery serves up Italian cuisine from Piemonte, the northwestern-most region of Italy. Its interiors could front as a museum, with a decor that actually borrows from regal influences including a Piemontese chandelier that is believed to once have belonged to Italian royalty.

Minetta Tavern

Featured in At The Codfish Ball (Season 5, Episode 7)

Peggy, unsure of whether her boyfriend Abe is about to break up with her or propose, is asked if she wants to move in with him, over dinner at Minetta's.

Back in the day, what P.J.'s was to musicians, Minetta, on Macdougal Street, was to writers. The current proprietors of the tavern have definitely benefited from all the legendary writers said to have been some of the joint's earliest customers. Now it seems unlikely that Lit majors will be able to afford a steeply priced meal at the place that once served affordable cocktails to the likes of E.E. Cummings, Ezra Pound and Ernest Hemingway. But the ambience is worth the price.

Long gone are the days where a bohemian, homeless celebrity like Joe Gould (who coincidentally graduated from Harvard with a degree in Literature) could hold court in the saloon accompanied by artists such as Franz Kline who drew caricatures to sponsor their lengthy bar tabs. Now it is a place to bask in the beauty of the days of yore while sucking on some succulent Bone Marrow, a house speciality.★

Four more *Mad Men* locales

- The Dublin House *(225 W 79th St)*
- Keens Steakhouse *(72 W 36th St)*
- La Grenouille *(3 E 52nd St)*
- Grand Central Oyster Bar *(89 E 42nd St).*

PHOTO COURTESY: NYCGO.COM (BAR); ED ROONEY/ALAMY/INDIAPICTURE (BUILDING)

By Kareena Gianani

VIETNAM FOR THE VORACIOUS

Why Anthony Bourdain gulped it all down on the go

Anthony Bourdain sampled Vietnam's piquant flavours with all his heart, be it pho (top) in Hanoi or clay pot rice in Saigon.

TV chef Anthony Bourdain travelled around the world to make taste-memories, armed with an open eye and an empty stomach. But it was Vietnam that proved "life-changing" for him. He spoke of its street food as if in rapture. "It just seemed like another planet; a delicious one that sort of sucked me in and never let go," he famously said.

To trace Bourdain's footsteps in Vietnam, hop between Ho Chi Minh City, Hue, and Hanoi. In Ho Chi Minh, visit **Cơm Niêu Sài Gòn** for *com dap* (clay pot rice). Watch as a waiter breaks a clay pot and sends it flying to another standing far away. The guy will catch it, and as soon as your heart rests, dig into rice topped with fish sauce, scallion and sesame. Crispy outside, soft inside, and totally worth the drama. Bourdain also loved their lobster grilled with paprika sauce, crabs fried in sweet basil, and zucchini blossoms stuffed with ground pork dipped in batter and deep fried.

No Bourdain fan will miss the pilgrimage to **Bún Chả Hương Liên**, where the chef and Barack Obama ate barbecued pork swimming in fragrant broth, served with noodles and greens. When in Hue, to try what to Bourdain was "in the hierarchy of delicious, slurpy stuff in a bowl... at the very top." Bún bò Hu, the pork and beef bone soup was made maddeningly delicious by shrimp paste, noodles, chilli and—congealed pork blood cubes. Go nowhere but to **Dong Ba Market** for this badass bowl.

KATHY HUTCHINS/SHUTTERSTOCK (ANTHONY BOURDAIN), DIMACHECHIN/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES (FOOD), BRAUN, STEFAN/STOCKFOOD/DINODIA PHOTO LIBRARY (WOMAN)

FILM

When in ROME on a Vespa

Rome is romantic for offering a wild ride to strangers and lovers as it did in Roman Holiday

BY SOHINI DAS GUPTA

Rome! By all means. Rome!"

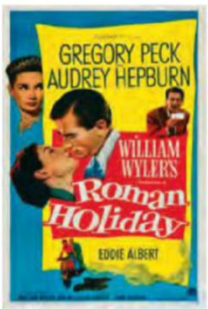
Princess Ann's proclamation of Rome as the place she'll always cherish was brought to life by Audrey Hepburn in William Wyler's runaway hit *Roman Holiday*. Also a runaway in this Vespa-gelato-adventure-filled 1953 romantic comedy was Ann herself, who longs to postpone her royal duties for a day of freedom in the city. Scoop-hungry stringer Joe Bradley (Gregory Peck) ferries the "hot princess," falling for her along the way.

Beginning backwards will take you to **Palazzo Colonna**, where Ann chooses duty over love at a climactic press conference. One of the city's oldest and largest private palaces, it is packed with baroque architecture, ceiling frescos, and spools of history (a canonball wedged in the Great Hall's marble stairs invokes the 1849 siege of Rome).

With that sombre moment out of the way, you can flick on a pair of rose goggles and dive into the duo's day trail. Start at the **Arch of Septimius Severus**—a marble triumphal arch at the northwest end of the Roman Forum—where Bradley finds the princess half-in-slumber after her escape from the embassy. Close by are the ruins of the **Temple of Saturn**, its eight surviving pillars standing tall like spectres watching over the city.

The **Colosseum** can never be too far away when you're in Rome, so of course the largest amphitheatre in the world makes an appearance in the lives of our one-day lovers. Its 2,000-year-old history weaves in the glory of an invincible architecture and the violence of gladiator battles and animal hunts.

Castel Sant'Angelo has served as a mausoleum, a fortress, a museum, and as the backdrop for the Princess Ann's lush night of dancing.



Playing the tourist in a city like Rome is as rewarding today as it would have been for Hepburn and Peck, but what's in it for an incognito wanderer unless it comes with a haircut and an epiphany? It is in a barber shop by the **Trevi Fountain** that princess Ann realises her lust for liberty, allowing the barber to trade shoulder-length curls for a trendier short crop. While you will not find Mario Delani's barber shop, the travertine fountain still stands mammoth-magnificent, thronged by coin-tossing tourists hoping for its magic to rub off on them.

Ann's appetite for change also leads her to her first gelato, bought from a street vendor and enjoyed at the **Spanish Steps**. The sweeping stairway links the Piazza di Spagna at its base with the 16th-century church of Trinità dei Monti at the top. Neighbouring the erstwhile residence of English poet John Keats (now a museum) and Babington's Tearoom, the Spanish Steps have long inspired dreamers and drifters. Ann is a bit of both as she mulls over the tender possibilities Rome presents in the frame of a single day. "Sit at a sidewalk café and look in shop windows, walk in the rain—have fun, and maybe some excitement."

THE HOLLYWOOD ARCHIVE/DINODIA PHOTO LIBRARY (POSTER), JOSE M. ALVAREZ/MOMENT/GETTY IMAGES (BRIDGE)
FACING PAGE: THE HOLLYWOOD ARCHIVE/DINODIA PHOTO LIBRARY, MARINAT197/SHUTTERSTOCK (ILLUSTRATION),
MARSBARS/DIGITALVISION VECTORS/GETTY IMAGES (FILM STRIP)

MUSIC

Ashes to ASHES FUNK to funky

Chasing STARMAN in Berlin

David Bowie sought refuge in the city at his lowest. A fan rewinds to the spots that saved the British rocker's life and career

BY VAISHALI DINAKARAN

I CAN REMEMBER STANDING BY THE WALL
AND THE GUNS SHOT ABOVE OUR HEADS
YOU LOOK SO GOOD TO ME
HERE IN THE OLD SALOON
A BOTTLE OF WHITE WINE
WHITE WINE AND YOU
A TABLE MADE OF WOOD
AND HOW I WISH YOU WOULD
FALL IN LOVE WITH ME

GEORGI STOYANOV/ALAMY/INDIAPICTURE (WALL); SMARTHA/SHUTTERSTOCK (LIGHTNING BOLT)
FACING PAGE: JIM FORREST/ALAMY/INDIAPICTURE (DAVID BOWIE); LEMONWINE/SHUTTERSTOCK (LYRICS); SPATULETAIL/SHUTTERSTOCK (BROWN STAMP) CHRISDORNEY/SHUTTERSTOCK (BLACK STAMP)

In the heart of Berlin's Mitte district,

where Köthener Strasse and Bernburger Strasse intersect, there's a piece of the Berlin Wall behind some chain link fencing. It's a single grey panel of the monstrosity that once divided the city into two. A relic, it sticks out like a sore thumb amongst the modern buildings that surround it. It's absurd. An oddity, much like the Wall itself, in whose shadows surreptitious meetings took place and forbidden lovers met, if only briefly, and kissed.

It was exactly this scene—a pair of lovers kissing by the **Berlin Wall**—that David Bowie witnessed through one of the windows at **Hansa Studios**, also on Köthener Strasse, just 150 feet up the road from the piece of the Wall that I'm gazing at. Somewhere here, Bowie's producer Tony Visconti had a quick rendezvous with a backup singer—Antonia Maass—with whom he was having an affair. The scene worked its way into Bowie's mind, and then into the lyrics that he was scribbling on a piece of paper. The song it inspired, "Heroes," would be recorded in the same studio.

'I can remember
Standing by the wall
And the guns, shot above our heads
And we kissed, as though nothing could fall'

I can almost hear Bowie crooning away in the background as I walk towards Hansa Studios, which is still in operation today. It's impossible to miss the studio—there's a huge hologram of Bowie on the side of the building. Seen at an angle, it's a photograph of him with a finger on his lips. Seen head on, the British musician has his hands around his open mouth, as if he's shouting something at you. As I edge closer, I observe something else there. A laminated card that someone has taped below the hologram. It has a picture of Bowie on it, the lightning bolt that he made so popular on the cover of *Aladdin Sane*, and a couple of black stars, a nod to the last album he released, two days before his death on January 10, 2016. Along with it the words, "Don't believe for just one second I'm forgetting you. From Lambini x. Love you forever x." I feel a curious touch of moisture in my eyes when I see this tribute, and am suddenly glad that I'm wearing sunglasses.

Later, I find myself a parking spot as close to **Hauptstrasse 155**, in the Schöneberg area. Between 1976 and 1978, Bowie lived on the first floor of this apartment building, sharing a flat with Iggy Pop. It was the home that he'd chosen as an escape. In Los Angeles, Bowie was a famous musician who couldn't escape the trappings of his celebrity, and had developed a cocaine habit which was leading to his ruin. In Berlin, he was able to kick the vices that seemed to come with his rockstar status, was able to retreat into anonymity, and, because he was nearly bankrupt at the time, could also live frugally. The city (and his able assistant Corinne 'Coco' Schwab) helped him clean up his act, think straight, and inspired much of his Berlin trilogy—the albums *Low*, *Heroes*, and *Lodger*.

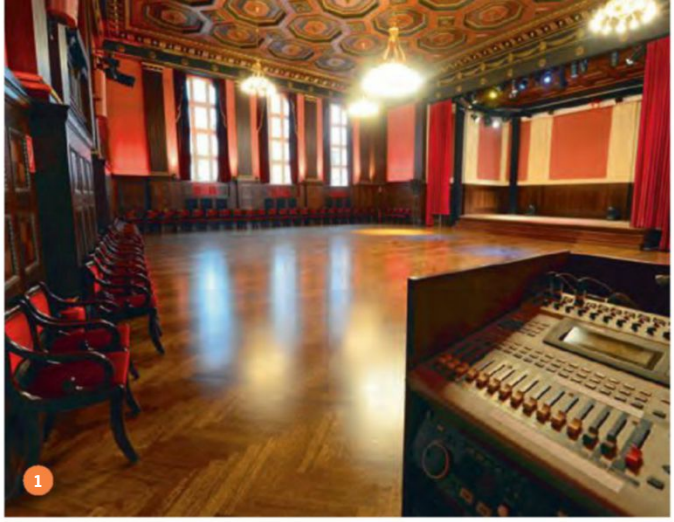
'I wanted no distractions
Like every good boy should
My-my
Nothing will corrupt us
Nothing will compete
Thank god heaven left us
Standing on our feet'

The lyrics of "Beauty and the Beast," the first track on *Heroes*, is meant to reflect Bowie's gratitude at having overcome the dark phase in his life. Gratitude not only for the life he led in Berlin, but for the city itself. Decades after he wrote the song, the city seems to have reciprocated with its own acknowledgement of how important and intrinsic to the city Bowie is. For the thousands of fans who flock to Hauptstrasse 155 every year in search of where Bowie lived, a plaque was put in place a few months after his death. Amongst the many details of Bowie's time in the city, one line on the plaque stands out. It says, simply, "We can be heroes, just for one day."

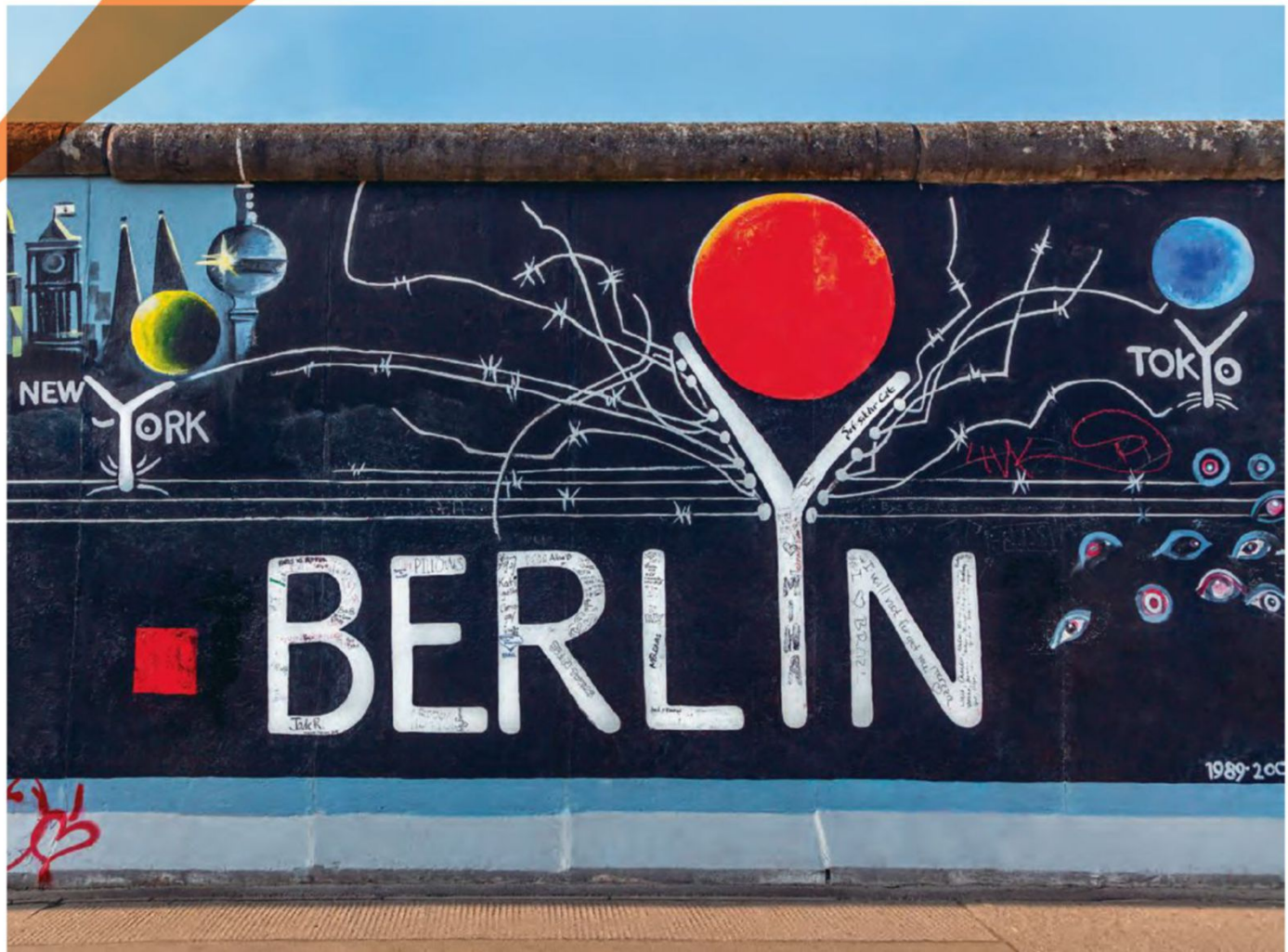
The tributes to Bowie, in combination with the impossibly hot day, have left me feeling a little drained. I'm grateful that my next stop is 10 steps away from where I'm standing. Back in the day, the **Neues Ufer** (New Shore) used to be an establishment called Anderes Ufer (Another Shore). It was famous for being one of the first café-cum-bars in Europe that was welcoming of the queer community, although, when it first opened, someone smashed in the venue's glass window. Bowie is rumoured to have paid to have the window replaced, after which he and Iggy were Ufer regulars—always

DAVID DIXON/ALAMY/INDIAPICTURE

1 Besides David Bowie, famous musicians such as REM and David Byrne recorded at Hansa Studios.
2 Paris Bar is the preferred hangout of many Berlin scenesters.
3 Guided walks or tours offer a glimpse of Bowie's Berlin.
4 In 2016, the British rocker's demise led to an outpouring of tributes outside his old home.
5 Bowie remains a figure of admiration here, with art exhibits often centred on him.



JENS KALAENE/DPA-ZENTRALBILD/DPA PICTURE-ALLIANCE/DINODIA PHOTO LIBRARY (1), JÜRGEN HENKELMANN/IMAGEBROKER/DINODIA PHOTO LIBRARY (2), JÖRG CARSTENSEN/DPA/DPA PICTURE-ALLIANCE/DINODIA PHOTO LIBRARY (3), KAY NIETFELD/DPA/DPA PICTURE-ALLIANCE/DINODIA PHOTO LIBRARY (4), WENN.COM/WENN LTD/DINODIA PHOTO LIBRARY (5)



DENIS O'REGAN/CONTRIBUTOR/PREMIUM ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES (DAVID BOWIE), TURTIX/SHUTTERSTOCK (WALL)

stopping by for a bite of breakfast, or a drink or two after work.

'Joe the lion
Went to the bar
A couple of drinks on the house an' he said
"Tell you who you are if you nail me to my car"
Boy
Thanks for hesitating
This is the kiss off'

It's hard to walk into a bar that David Bowie was known to frequent without these lyrics floating about in my head. If I could break into song without embarrassing myself, I would. Entering the Neues Ufer has lifted my spirit. It's ever-so-slightly dingy—as though the furniture and the bar counter have stayed the same since Bowie last knocked back a cold one there. It's a summer day and the patrons of the bar sit outside, sunning themselves. I head inside and find a spot that allows me a view of the Bowie mural that Sydney-based artist Brad Robson painted on the wall. Just below the portrait is a glass case with various types of cake on display. Amongst the various bottles behind the bar are a few ceramic busts of Bowie. I settle on a glass of rosé, and in between sips I walk around looking at the various portraits and photographs of Bowie that adorn the walls. A little over 40 years after Bowie was a Neues Ufer regular, the whole place is a tribute to him—and a celebration of all that he stood for.

While Bowie led a quiet life in Berlin, dressing in dowdy clothes and hanging out at dive bars, there was still something of the rockstar in him. He might have enjoyed the fact that no one in Berlin cared who he was, or where he went, or what he did, but every now and again, he yearned for the good life. And it was on such days that he treated himself to a night out at the **Paris Bar**, known to serve some of the finest and most expensive *steak frites* in town. This is where music journalist Chris Hodenfield interviewed Bowie and Pop for his famous 'Bad Boys In Berlin' piece for *Rolling Stone* magazine, and where Pop got so drunk that he rolled around in the ice outside the bar.

TOP FIVE

- BERLIN WALL
- NEUES UFER
- PARIS BAR
- HAUPTSTRASSE 155
- HANSA STUDIOS

In 1987, Bowie (top) returned to the city for an open-air, sell-out concert outside the Reichstag, during which thousands of fans defiantly belted his songs as their voices carried across the Berlin Wall (bottom) to the East. Bowie recalled it as one of his most emotional shows, saying, "We would hear them cheering and singing along from the other side... it was breaking my heart."

'Oh you, you walk on past
Your lips cut a smile on your face
(Your scalding face) to the cage, to the cage
She was a beauty in a cage'

The Paris Bar is located at Kantstrasse 152, in Charlottenberg. It's one of the upmarket areas in the city, with the Kurfürstendamm, Berlin's equivalent of the Champs de Elysees just around the corner. I see many beautiful and well-dressed men and women walking right past me, as I settle into a seat at a table on the sidewalk. It's too early in the day for me to wolf down a €80/₹6,350 steak, Paris Bar's famous signature dish. So I settle for another glass of rosé, and spend some time people watching. When it gets too hot, I take a look inside the bar, which is covered from ceiling to floor with photographs and original artwork. There's a signed picture of Yves Saint-Laurent, and paintings by German artist Martin Kippenberger. When Michel Würthle, the owner of the bar, found himself in financial trouble, he sold one of Kippenberger's paintings for a couple of million, saving one of Bowie's favourite Berlin haunts. Since I've had the chance to experience one of the only 'glam' spots in the city that Bowie frequented, I am thankful that he did.

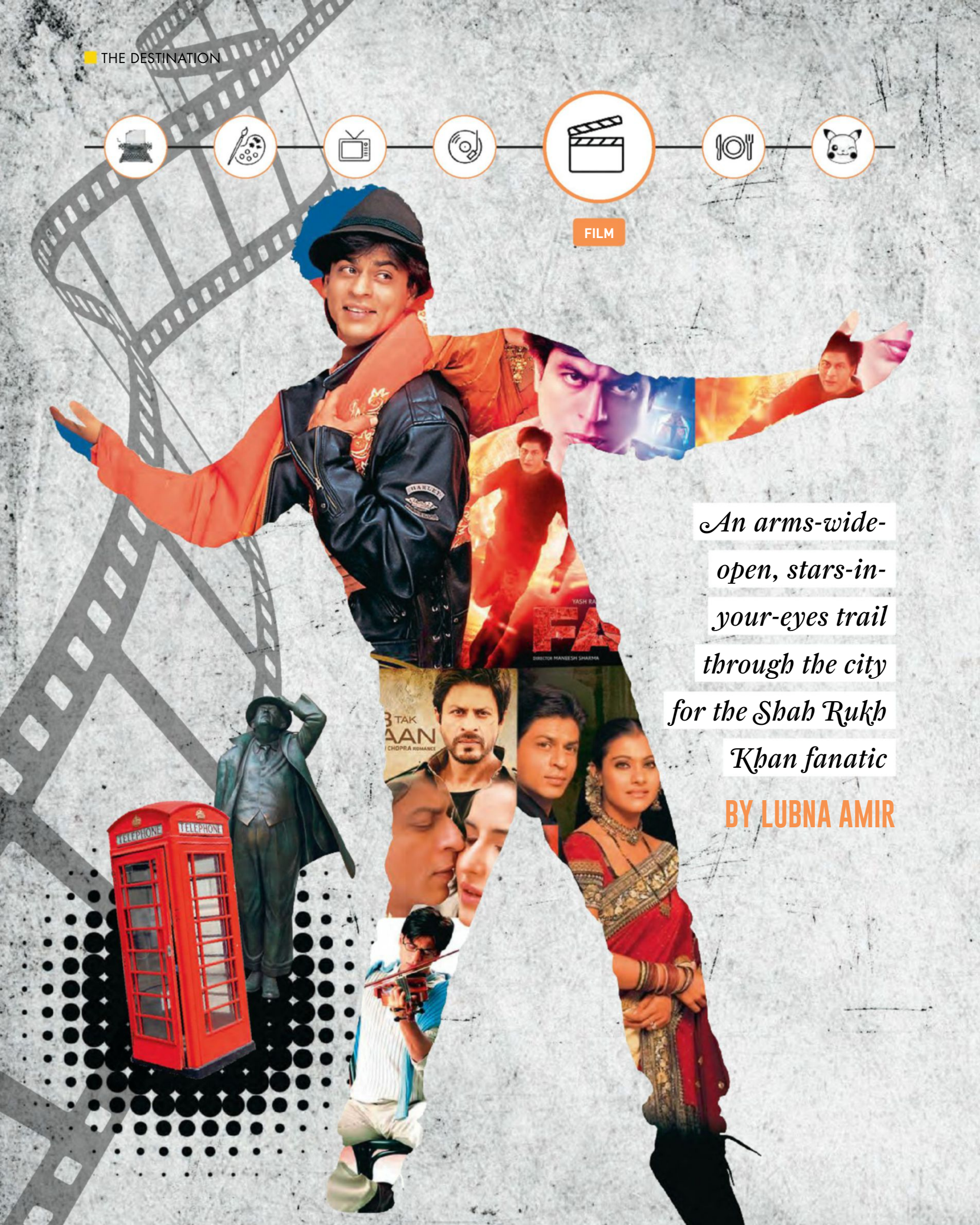
Bowie might not have lived in Berlin since the late 1970s, but his connection to the city, and its influence on him has endured. On January 8, 2013, his 66th birthday, he released "Where Are We Now?" a single from his 24th studio album, *The Next Day*. The lyrics and the music video take us from **Potsdamer Platz**, the geographical city centre, to the KaDeWe, Berlin's oldest shopping mall, and the Dschungel club on Nürnberger Strasse, where Bowie was famously told to get off stage after belting out a couple of Frank Sinatra numbers to an unimpressed audience. I drive down **Nürnberger Strasse**, where the old Dschungel has since been replaced by the swanky four-star **Ellington Hotel**. I think of changing times.

See, back in 2014, (like Bowie once did) I walked through Berlin, lost and wondering where I was at that point in my life. I'd sauntered down **Oranienstrasse**, wandered past **Checkpoint Charlie**, and then, without warning, found myself at the **Martin Gropius Bau**, where a massive David Bowie exhibition was temporarily on display. It remains, till this day, one of the biggest coincidences to have ever occurred in my life. I bought tickets to it, and spent the next few hours a little less lost. I took it as a sign that life would turn out alright after all.

'Twenty thousand people
Cross Böse Brücke
Fingers are crossed...'

... Bowie sings in "Where Are We Now." On November 9 1989, the Berlin Wall fell. The **Böse Brücke**, or the 'bad bridge,' was the first place where people were able to cross freely between East Berlin and West Berlin. As they made their way over the bridge, they had their fingers crossed, with hope for a better future. Hope that things would be all right. A feeling, I imagine as I walk over the bridge, similar to the sentiment that Bowie harboured, when he moved to Berlin back in the day. And a feeling that resonates with many who cross over to the other side, after having endured hard times.

FILM



An arms-wide-open, stars-in-your-eyes trail through the city for the Shah Rukh Khan fanatic

BY LUBNA AMIR

The KING'S London Eye

Trafalgar Square

No one romances better than Shah Rukh Khan.

My first memory of love, or a man I love, is of him. SRK, dimple-cheeked, arms wide open, standing in a mustard field in *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (*DDLJ*), is what dreams are made of. Or him hopping off a helicopter and whipping off his shades in *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* (*K3G*); or him dancing in the rain with Kajol in a gazebo in *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai*; or in the black suit leaning rakishly against a pillar, whispering to Madhuri Dixit "*aur paas*" in *Dil To Pagal Hai*... these are all scenes ensconced in my memory. There is no movie of his I haven't seen, even the questionable ones that fair-weather fans avoid.

But with him comes another association—that of London. Off-screen, it's one of Khan's favourite cities. He's bought a house there and shooting in London, he says, makes him happy.

Call it colonial hangover, but the city has always fascinated Indians. The idea of London intrigues, entices, and is shown beautifully in Shah Rukh Khan's movies. Take Aditya Chopra's *DDLJ* (1995). The opening scene sees the patriarch Chaudhry Baldev Singh (Amrish Puri) feeding pigeons in **Trafalgar Square** (an act now banned) and dreaming of Punjab before he hears the bells of **St. Martin-in-the-Fields**, and walks back to his shop in Indian-dominated Southall in West London. He takes the most

OOTO ELIZONDO/DIGITALVISION/GETTY IMAGES (FOUNTAIN)
FACING PAGE: MARTINLISNER/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES (TELEPHONE BOOTH), 400TMAX/ISTOCK UNRELEASED/GETTY IMAGES (STATUE)

Butler's Wharf

touristy (and long-drawn) of routes, crossing the **Westminster Bridge, Big Ben**, **Buckingham Palace** and **Ministry of Defence**, with the sequence introducing London to viewers. The paths of the lovers Simran (Kajol) and Raj (SRK) first cross unwittingly in **Leicester Square**. Before riding off into the sunset with Simran on a train in the climax (shot at Apta Station), he pulls her onto a train at the Victorian **King's Cross Station** in London, ensuring she makes it for her Europe trip with her friends (he's on one too with his). Another song features them dreaming about each other in London's open-top buses, parks, or while riding the escalators at **Angel Underground Station**. The second half is shot in India, but by now London is firmly embedded in the fan's (and my) brain.

In Karan Johar's *K3G* (2001), Rohan (Hrithik Roshan) learns from a distant relative's kid that his estranged elder brother Rahul (SRK), has moved to London. "*Woh* London *gaye. Ek din mein bhi jaunga*," the kid tells Rohan. These words were echoed by a friend of mine, another diehard fan, when she visited the city for the first time last year. There was no bevy of girls singing "Vande Mataram" to welcome her on the other side, as in Rohan's case, but she managed to get her photos at **Tower Bridge**, **The London Eye** and **Natural History Museum**, spots Rohan is shown in. Fans can dine at **Cantina del Ponte** at **Butler's Wharf**. It's got one of the most scenic views of Tower Bridge. This Italian restaurant is also the beginning of Rohan and Pooja's (Kareena Kapoor) flirtation, and where she agrees to help him reunite their family. Rohan moves into Rahul's **Hampstead** house soon after. Here, he teaches Rahul's son and his classmates the Indian national anthem, which they then perform for the annual day function—a scene shot at the **Osterley Park and House**, one of the largest green, open spaces in London. A visit to the mega-shopping complex **Bluewater** in Kent though is a real fan's deal, with its 330 stores and a 17-screen theatre. An hour away from the main city, it is pivotal to the movie. It is here that Rahul is reunited with his mother, Nandini (Jaya Bachchan), after a decade of separation. I tear up every time.

Director Yash Chopra's last movie before he died, *Jab Tak Hai Jaan* (2012), was predominantly shot in London too. Starring SRK, Anushka Sharma and Katrina Kaif, the movie is as much a love song to the city as it is about Khan and Kaif character's journeys. Samar (SRK) meets Meera (Kaif) when she comes to the 19th-century **All Saints Church in Blackheath**, one she's oddly attached to. He sings for money at the buzzing trade district **Canary Wharf**, and poses with Poet Laureate Sir John Betjeman's statue at **St Pancras Station**. Samar romances Meera across the city during the song "Saans"—in Covent Garden's colourful alley **Neal's Yard**, in a **Hyde Park** turned autumn-russet, in a red telephone booth. The elegantly decked-up couple swirl under the glass dome of **Syon Park's** neoclassical **Great Conservatory** and frolic around **Somerset House's** lit-up, burbling fountains. The duo sizzles in the dance number "Ishq Shava," shot at night in the graffiti-brimming **Banksy Tunnel in Leake Street**, and at **Trinity Buoy Wharf**, a creative hub bursting with art studios and exhibitions. In one of the behind-the-scenes videos, Chopra states that he could've shot the movie anywhere, but he wanted the story to be set in London. I can see why.★

Jab Tak Hai Jaan

Banksy Tunnel

Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge

SUSANNE NEUMANN/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES (STREET), GUYCARPENTERPHOTO/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES (GRAFFITI)

MANOR-OF-FACTLY

If you are going down the road to chase shoot locations, set forth from London to explore the many manor houses and palaces around the city that have been home to scenes from Shah Rukh Khan movies, which may or may not be set in India

BLENHEIM PALACE, OXFORDSHIRE

Remember Kareena Kapoor sashaying in a hot pink skirt at her college in *K3G*? Or the driveway where Hrithik Roshan vrooms in a red Lamborghini and catches her eye? It's all here. Blenheim Palace, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the birthplace of Winston Churchill, acts as a backdrop for their college.

STOWE SCHOOL, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Set in the expansive estate of Stowe House, this independent school was shown as Hrithik Roshan's alma mater in *K3G*. In fact, the movie opens with Shah Rukh Khan's voiceover reinforcing the movie's 'love your parents' theme while Roshan hits the winning ball in a game of cricket, played on the school's lush grounds.

Mohabbatein

LONGLEAT HOUSE, WILTSHIRE

The seat of the Marquess of Bath, the Longleat House and its grounds were the setting for *Mohabbatein's* (2000) Gurukul. Whether it is Shah Rukh Khan playing the violin in the gazebo, or Amitabh Bachchan framed at the entrance while the wind whirls around him, Longleat's Elizabethan facade is unforgettable. It was even on the film's poster!

WADDESDON MANOR, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

The Raichand House in *K3G*, supposedly set in Delhi, is in fact Waddesdon Manor, built by Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild in 1880. The movie familiarised the audience with the manor's neo-Renaissance architecture by sneaking in aerial shots of the estate, and of Shah Rukh Khan and Rani Mukerji jogging along its grounds.

OLEGALBINSKY/ISTOCK UNRELEASED/GETTY IMAGES (BLENHEIM PALACE); KEITH DOUGLAS/ALAMY/INDIAPICTURE (STOWE SCHOOL); SEBASEBO/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES (WADDESDON MANOR)

MUSIC

Walkin' in MEMPHIS

Elvis Presley looms large everywhere in his hometown, but for the King's devotees, some stops are mandatory

BY JULIAN MANNING

Part of the upstairs of Graceland (top) remains respectfully cordoned off, as the area was where Elvis sought solitude. A favourite order of Elvis fans at the Arcade Restaurant (bottom) is the Fried Peanut Butter 'N' Banana Sandwich—don't forget to add bacon!

CARONB/ISTOCK EDITORIAL/GETTY IMAGES (GRACELAND); HORIZONS WWP/TRVL/ALAMY/INDIAPICTURE (CAFÉ)
FACING PAGE: THE HOLLYWOOD ARCHIVE/DINODIA PHOTO LIBRARY (ELVIS); PICTURELAKE/ISTOCK UNRELEASED/GETTY IMAGES (ALBUM); DAN KOSMAYER/SHUTTERSTOCK (STAMP)

Elvis Presley was born in a shotgun shack in Tupelo, Mississippi, in 1935. 'The King' moved to Memphis when he was in high school and became enamoured by the blues and country that emanated from Beale Street, the downtown drag. The curious thing about Elvis is he didn't ditch his hometown in the dust for a penthouse view as soon as his fame skyrocketed and his wallet started to bulge. He owned many houses, but none of them were home like Memphis. When Elvis was at his **Graceland mansion** he didn't keep himself locked up behind gilded gates. Elvis was a man of the people, who went to church with his folks, went out for burgers with his wife, and goofed around with his friends, a group he called 'The Memphis Mafia.'

The way the King carried himself is mirrored by how Memphis remembers him. There are few towns that honour their heroes like Memphis honours Elvis. Since the town hasn't been Disney-fied or inundated with anodyne tourist traps, for the most part, his old haunts are filled with vintage picture frames and fond memories. And if you walk around town, there's a good chance you might bump into an older Memphian who knew or at least met Elvis—and any betting man worth a hoot would wager a peanut butter and banana sandwich that the interaction was a pleasure for both.

GRACELAND

Elvis's Graceland home features the King's intriguing **Jungle Room**. The kitschy man cave is upholstered with thick, dark green carpeting, decorated with tiki-inspired furniture glistening with a bright lacquer varnish, as well as a built-in waterfall. It is both gaudy and gorgeous, something only Elvis could pull off, like his V-neck jumpsuits. The den also moonlighted as a recording studio for Elvis towards the end of his career. Across the road from Graceland, right next to where two of Elvis' planes are parked, fans can carve their names into a small wooden bridge, a true rite of passage for Presley lovers.

ARCADE RESTAURANT

Elvis loved to eat, and a great place to share in that love is **Arcade Restaurant**, which claims to be Memphis's oldest cafe. A breakfast of sausage biscuits or sweet potato pancakes will do you right, even if you don't get to sit in Elvis' favourite booth, which is often occupied by hungry fans.

SUN STUDIOS

For music lovers, **Sun Studios** is an even more impressive stop than Graceland. Of course the King recorded here, but so did B.B. King, Johnny Cash and Howlin' Wolf. Musicians can record a track in the real Sun Studios and take advantage of its fabled acoustics—that is if they shell out $200 *(₹13,931)* per hour.

LANSKY BROS.

Often referred to as The Clothier To The King, **Lansky Bros** is the spot to pick up Elvis-inspired swag. The story goes that the owner, Bernard Lansky, was kind to Elvis before he became Memphis royalty, an act that resulted in the King's undying loyalty. Lansky had the honour of dressing Elvis for *The Ed Sullivan Show*, and legend has it, even suggested that he start popping his collar, and pair pink with black. And you can actually buy a pair of blue suede shoes here.

MORE ELVIS STOPS

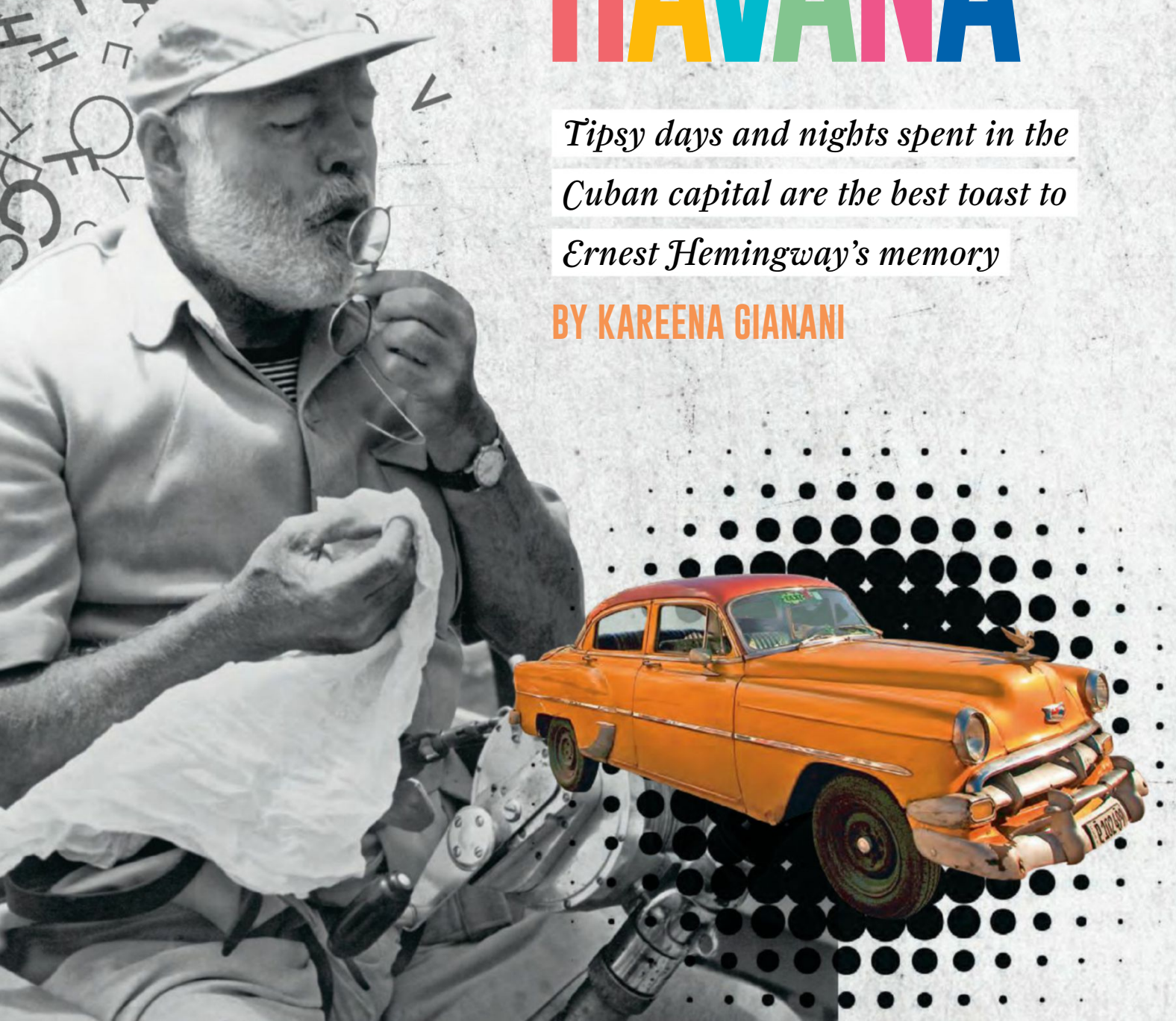
Visit **Lauderdale Courts** (Now Uptown Square, the apartment complex where Elvis grew up), and catch a concert at **Levitt Shell**, a local outdoor venue where he used to play.

BOOKS

Heart in HAVANA

Tipsy days and nights spent in the Cuban capital are the best toast to Ernest Hemingway's memory

BY KAREENA GIANANI



'My mojito in La Bodeguita, my daiquiri in El Floridita'

Once you've grooved to all the salsa tunes the city croons; when the old town's plazas and cathedrals have been visited; when you've watched lovers and fishermen at the Malecón, turn your eye to Ernest Hemingway's Havana.

After moving to Cuba in 1939, he and his wife set up home 13 kilometres southeast of Havana's old town, and called it **Finca Vigia**. It was here that Hemingway wrote *The Old Man and the Sea*, *A Moveable Feast* and *Islands in the Stream*. Today, travellers who wish to see his bookshelves, eye his vinyl records—and his gin collection—can take a tour of the home. His boat, *El Pilar*, too stands in the grounds.

Back in Havana, there's no better homage to the writer than to make your days and nights as boozy as you can. Start with **La Bodeguita del Medio**, and watch the bartenders mix rows and rows of mojitos. Hemingway's motto—"My mojito in La Bodeguita, my daiquiri in El Floridita"—lie lovingly framed above the bar. The latter has set its love for the man in bronze. Enter **El Floridita** bar and you'll see Hemingway's life-size statue standing in his favourite corner, looking approvingly at crowds downing daiquiris.

Lastly, pop by at **Hotel Ambos Mundos**, the art deco structure at the heart of Habana Vieja (old town). Room 511 is left the way Hemingway last left it, his typewriter and Louis Vuitton case untouched. His size 11 shoes are in there too, along with artworks gifted to him by Pablo Picasso.

The walls of La Bodeguita del Medio, Ernest Hemingway's beloved haunt in Havana, carry autographs of Fidel Castro, Nat King Cole, and Harry Belafonte.

LUCAS VALLECILLOS/AGEFOTOSTOCK/DINODIA PHOTO LIBRARY (DINING)
FACING PAGE: TASSUIG/UNIVERSAL IMAGES GROUP/DINODIA PHOTO LIBRARY (ERNEST HEMINGWAY),
CEM CANBAY/AGEFOTOSTOCK/DINODIA PHOTO LIBRARY (CAR), KANNAA/SHUTTERSTOCK (ALPHABETS)

FILM

Starring HONG KONG

Waltzing with the neon-drenched city through the cinema of Wong Kar-Wai

BY KAREENA GIANANI

Stiletto-like buildings, Chinese signs, and *ding dings* (trams) lend a cinematic air to Hennessy Road.

BIG CHEESE PHOTO/BIG CHEESE PHOTO/GETTY IMAGES (CITY)
FACING PAGE: AF ARCHIVE/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO/INDIAPICTURE (IN THE MOOD FOR LOVE), FEATUREFLASH PHOTO AGENCY/SHUTTERSTOCK (WONG KAR-WAI), PHOTO 12/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO/INDIAPICTURE (CHUNGKING EXPRESS)

The

HONG KONG

neighbourhood of Tsim Sha Tsui stays up late like an insomniac, tipsy on a cocktail of neon signs lining its streets. Tourists prowl up and down Nathan Road with wheelies full of sneakers and cosmetics, but locals know how to duck out and find their favourite *dai pai dong* serving chicken's feet or warm egg waffles. One evening I watch crowds surge forward, past the space museum's dome onto the Promenade. They walk with baby-steps, a roiling sea of pilgrims headed—where? The daily 8 p.m. light-and-laser show, when over 40 Hong Kong skyscrapers throw a harbourside soiree.

I turn and walk in the opposite direction, past malls the size of castles, and halt outside a seedy, 17-storey shopping complex. Everybody in Hong Kong knows what **Chungking Mansions** is—an infamous hive of low-cost hotels, burrow-size homes, and electronic stores. It smells of heavenly kebabs and risk, like anything could happen here: a shootout, a drug deal; or you could run into The One over a plate of naan and keema mattar.

I've waited to enter this dodgy building for years after I watched *Chungking Express* (1994), one of Hong Kong's best films, where two lovelorn cops run into two enigmatic women. Cop 223 (Takeshi Kaneshiro) deals with his break-up by collecting cans of pineapple expiring on May 1, when he meets a femme fatale (Brigitte Lin) hiding beneath a blonde wig and a secret. Cop 663

(Tony Leung), freshly dumped and talking to soaps and towels around his house, encounters Faye (Faye Wong), a pixie-cut girl working at the snack bar he frequents.

There's the Hong Kong one imagines: vertigo-giving skyscrapers, business districts, branded boutiques. Some shrines and colonial landmarks thrown in. But for me it was filmmaker Wong Kar-Wai who unravelled spirals of other Hong Kongs within. In *Chungking*, his shaky, hand-held camera took me to the nooks of his boyhood; the blurred photography made me feel like I was looking into someone's daydream. I could taste a loneliness peculiar to living in a city of millions, of fleeting relationships that leave you feeling chipped and off-kilter. There are larger metaphors too: The film's opening cello score is a fit of nerves, invoking a Hong Kong eyeing a ticking clock, jittery about its impending handover to the Chinese in 1997. "I've become every cautious," says the woman in the blonde wig, "When I put on a raincoat, I also put on sunglasses. Who knows when it will rain or when will it turn out sunny?"

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That night, I take the ferry from Kowloon to Hong Kong Island (they're the city's two main islands) and come to **Lan Kwai Fong**, the city's nightlife district. Its hillside streets are strung with nightclubs and restaurants, and a techno beat is always in the air. What I'm looking for—Midnight Express, the snack bar in the second part of *Chungking Express*—has closed down. A 7-Eleven has replaced the corner where Faye mixes sauces and salads, bobbing her head to "California Dreamin'," blasting it to keep out the world. So I pick up a bottle of the local Tsingtao beer and walk down D'Aguilar Street that slants like a drunk, humming the tune to myself.

I return in the morning because **Old Town Central** is the nucleus of Hong Kong. It is the first map I'm handed at the airport, so I see why many tourists make the mistake of never venturing out. Almost two centuries after the British navy arrived at the 'fragrant harbour,' its lanes don period costumes and playact both their colonial and Chinese past. One minute I am standing beneath spirals of incense hanging from the ceiling at Man Mo Temple, the next I am opposite murals of Marilyn Monroe and Charlie Chaplin, and the third I am walking up Pottinger Street. It is steep, and lined with vendors selling party costumes and freakishly life-like masks of Donald Trump, Kim Jong-un and Vladimir Putin. I deliberate over which one to pick for the night.

Imagining a flat Hong Kong is like imagining Russian vodka without its bite; it wouldn't constantly brawl with space if wild, bosky mountains didn't tower over its highrises. Neither would it come up with utterly ingenious inventions like the **Mid-Levels Escalator** in Central. The world's largest pedestrian escalator cuts through over 2,600 feet of Hong Kong's steep hillside, carrying about a lakh of people every day. In *Chungking Express* it ferries Faye's infatuation as she crouches and spies Cop 663's house beside the escalator. She has work to do—breaking into his home to redecorate it so he gets over the memories of his ex. Swapping sardine tin brands, new fish in his tank, even spiking his water with sleeping pills after he complains of insomnia. It makes sense.

CHA CHAAN TENG

Hungry in Hong Kong? Visit these old-world diners. Egg tarts—warm custard in ready-to-crumble pastries—at Honolulu café in Wan Chai are bites of sunshine. Kam Fung, a 5-minute walk away, serves delish chicken pie and pineapple buns.

DING DING

Hop on a *ding ding* (tram) to be whisked away to the Hong Kong of the early 1900s. Bag a seat at a window of the upper deck and watch chaotic, colourful neighbourhoods of Hong Kong Island unfurl, be it Causeway Bay, Happy Valley, or Wan Chai.

GLOWONCONCEPT/SHUTTERSTOCK (EGG TART), ALAN BENGE/SHUTTERSTOCK (TRAM), JONAS GRATZER (STALL, ROBOT & WOMAN), PHOTO 12/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO/INDIAPICTURE (CHUNGKING EXPRESS STILL)

For the writer, strolling across Hong Kong becomes a quest to see everyday life that looks right out of a Wong Kar-Wai film—steamy kitchens (top left)**, restaurants served by robots** (top right)**, and boatwomen ferrying tourists at Aberdeen Bay** (bottom left)**—a lot like Faye Wong on the Mid-Levels Escalator in *Chungking Express*** (bottom right).

JONAS GRATZER

I hop on and off the Mid-Levels—it's a series of 20 interconnected escalators. Below, Central spreads out like a graphic novel. At **Gage Street**, I give way to dashing waiters in Lan Fong Yuen serving 'pantyhose milk tea'—velvety and dream-creamy, made with evaporated milk and brewed in a polyester sock-like net. At **8 Cochrane Street**, sharp-suited bankers mill around Good Spring Company, a century-old Chinese medicine clinic serving herbal teas with names that make you sigh, like Love-Pea Vine. Wong Kar-Wai's locations work like a telescope; look long enough and vivid details of everyday life come into focus, swaying to tunes old and new like his characters do when no one's watching.

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Around dusk, I head to **Tai Kwun arts centre** to meet a friend. C was born in a different Hong Kong, when it was still a British colony in the late '80s. As a student, he and millions across the city rose in protests during the Umbrella Revolution of 2014, when Hong Kong demanded that Beijing not meddle with its elections. When he speaks of how fast his city morphs, I only have to glance around to see what he means. There is a quiet pleasure when we pop cans of beer on Tai Kwun's grounds, looking up at beautiful mid-19th century buildings. There is existential poetry on the walls for hipsters to love, film screenings, and a soft clang of drums in the air. You almost forget that Tai Kwun complex was originally a prison, police station, and two courts.

C teases me when he hears about my Wong Kar-Wai-led strolls. "So, what's next? You'll hire a cheongsam and walk around Central? Be all Maggie Cheung in *In The Mood For Love*!" I snort and decide not to tell him that Linva Tailors, who stitched some of those gorgeous, figure-loving dresses for the actress is indeed a three-minute walk away.

We talk about an exhibition that looks at collecting everyday objects as a way of linking the past and present. For all the ways in which Hong Kong hurtles towards the future, it pines for its past like an old friend. I first sense this wistfulness in Wong Kar-Wai's most famous film, *In The Mood For Love* (2000). It follows two neighbours—Tony Leung and Maggie Cheung—who discover their spouses are having an affair. It is also Wong Kar-Wai's love poem to the golden years of Hong Kong—the early 1960s. Born in Shanghai in 1956, he immigrated to Hong Kong at age five, inhabiting a city that doesn't exist anymore. He shapes that longing tenderly: scenes awash in crimsons and chromes; steamy kitchens with wizened cooks packing dim sums in aluminum tiffins; actors framed in artful, almost voyeuristic frames to capture Hong Kong's ever-cramped rooms and stairways.

If that city can still be found, it will be back in **Kowloon**.

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Trust me—you'll know when you've arrived in **Mong Kok**. Stiletto-like buildings come in all the colours of candy in this suburb. Curvy old Chinese typefaces outside shops will hawk things you can't read and don't need, but will pine for. Somehow, almost every street you turn into will be lined with caravans of red minibuses. These are Hong Kong's cheap rides that connect the remotest corners. (If you hop on one, hold on tight as it swerves and streaks like the Knight Bus, and scream "*YAU LOK*!" when you want to get off.)

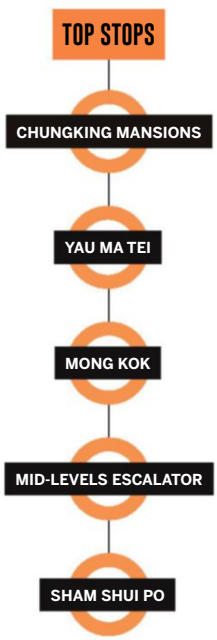
I walk into **Kam Wah café**, a typical Hong Kong *cha chaan teng*—no-frills, 1950s-style diner serving an array of Western and Chinese fare. It is always full, so I *dap toi* (share a table) with seven others. I wave at a blur that's the waitress, and she zooms in to hand me an English menu. No smiles, no small talk; in fact I feel like a nuisance when I linger over her plastic-sheathed booklet for too long. I love it.

A feast arrives, one like I've never seen. The red bean frappes and iced Ovaltine are claimed by the gang of schoolgirls on my table. The couple with the fussy-eater kid stuff him with instant noodles topped with ham and egg. The uncle with thin hair and basset-hound eyes eats his corned beef sandwich as if in meditation. It's a frame Wong Kar-Wai would've been proud of, where actors emote with postures and glances more than words. I bite into a *bo luo bao*—the gold, sugar-crusted "pineapple bun" hiding a thick slab of butter, which tastes like my favourite song. The egg tart and fried noodles with diced pork make me want to hug everyone at the table. Instead, I too bend my head down and join the orchestra of noodle-slurps. While leaving I nod at the blur-waitress, but she scowls, and somehow that makes me happier.

I begin to see how Hong Kong wasn't just the setting in the movies I'd loved; it was the lead character, always. Wong Kar-Wai rarely came to the set with a script, he scouted for locations before he wrote anything. "[In this city] the space tells you what the characters are, why they're there," he once said. So I too begin moving through Hong Kong like he would, intuitively, not just tracing film locations. I walk around Mong Kok in circles, in saturated, neon-filled streets I'd seen in *As Tears Go By* (1988), Wong Kar-Wai's directorial debut. I enter just about any place, like the underground videogame arcade, **Game Zone**, where everyone's half my age and no one can hear each other over the metallic scores. I follow a girl dressed in a pinafore—a lacy white bow in her hair, game face on. She wins every *Mai Mai* game she plays.

DAI PAI DONG

All of Hong Kong smells of food all the time, and it has something to do with these open-air food stalls. Try egg waffles at stalls lining Mong Kok, chicken's feet at Keung Kee in Sham Shui Po, and crab, clam, and beef in oyster sauce at Sing Kee in Central.



MORKHATENOK/SHUTTERSTOCK

The area's **Flower** and **Ladies Markets** teem with people. At the nearby Yuen Po Bird Garden, I don't quite know what to feel about the elderly men carrying their birds in carved bamboo cages, so I leave.

Walking south leads me to the suburb of **Yau Ma Tei**. I am well aware that as an outsider passing by for a week, there's no Hong Kong 'essence' that'll magically reveal itself to me on its way to an Instagram post. But we all get mental snapshots to keep, and the ones I gather in Yau Ma Tei are of a neighbourhood in transition. It no longer retains the opium dens of the 1900s, or the gang wars of the '80s, but is good friends with its past. The pre-WW II **Yau Ma Tei theatre** now stages Cantonese opera with English subtitles. Smack opposite is **Gwo Laan**, the wholesale fruit market with Dutch colonial-looking gabled roofs, here since 1913. Come evening, ladies will croon local and Western hits at **Canton Singing House**, a singalong parlour two lanes away. These have existed in Yau Ma Tei since the '70s and not much has changed inside—certainly not the disco balls on the ceiling, or the regulars who know to tip about HKD40 per song they like. Change, however, has come in the form of **Prosperous Garden** near Gwo Laan, and **Broadway Cinematheque** in its grounds, which screens only art films (I pick up a certain filmmaker's posters near the booking office). Armed with a rose iced coffee from its café-bookstore—named after Stanley Kubrick, of course—I move on. Outside, an old building is being demolished but another is painted high with a beautiful mural of a boy and his bike. From nowhere, a Space Invader peers from a corner.

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Over the past year, Hong Kong's tourism board has unveiled their new poster child: a suburb farther north in Kowloon. **Sham Shui Po** is a former fishing village, and Hong Kongers visit it—with a hawk-eye on their wallets—if they need cheap gadgets, or fancy a meal at Tim Ho Wan, a Michelin-star joint where dim sums cost only HKD20/₹175. I head there after reading a cautious op-ed that wonders if the suburb has what it takes to be Hong Kong's answer to London's Shoreditch or NYC's Brooklyn.

Sham Shui Po's salmon, jade, and blue-white buildings don't reach for the sky; they curve voluptuously at the corners. People haggle at open street markets with the rare passion they reserve for the weekend. There's a lone barbers' chair in a back alley, where the man gives the ritual the time it truly deserves. I turn into a street that sells buttons—only buttons. The next one, beads. The street after, leather. Then ribbons. Toys—weird, wacky, crazy toys. I stop counting the number of shrines I spot at the bottom of buildings' doorways—a red plaque and a pot to light joss sticks, believed to bless the people living within. Folks actually stop to talk to each other in the streets; the lilt of Cantonese swings in corners. Here time works in loops, and it's easy to see how a sense of community glues Sham Shui Po in place.

The suburb keeps its old ways remarkably well preserved. To leaf through its memory-journal, I first walk into **Kung Wo Beancurd Factory**, where a red T-shirted army whips up silken beancurd pudding and deep-fried tofu that still taste of the '60s. It's run by a woman who left her investment banking career to return to the family business. Thirty-something Au-yeung Ping-chi sits at **Bo Wah**, a store his father founded in the '60s to make paper effigies burnt as ritual offerings to ancestors. Apart from the usual gold and money effigies, he gets orders for smartphones and electric guitars for the cooler dead. The egg noodles I eat at **Lau Sum Kee** are made from scratch like they have been for six decades, kneaded daily with a bamboo pole. In **Yee Kuk Street**, I stumble across a three-storey building with grid-like windows on the top two floors, splashed with old Chinese calligraphy. It is the first *tong lau* I have seen in Hong Kong—a type of tenement building prevalent in the late-19th century across South China—and this one belonged to a framemaker. I am lulled into feeling that Sham Shui Po is in no danger of disappearing. But slowly, I see signs of gentrification that might alter this hood in less a decade: Hipster cafés and design boutiques bracket old bakeries selling *put chai koh* (traditional Chinese bowl puddings). It seems a matter of time until real estate prices rise, leaving Sham Shui Po's old-timers out of breath.

Like all big cities, Hong Kong is cross-stitched with stories; tug at one thread and a new tale comes undone. And that is the most curious doorway Wong Kar-Wai's cinema opens for me. I return like a homing pigeon to places I am most invisible and happiest in. I catch late-night ***ding dings*** (trams) going to districts I am clueless about, just to feel the imagined Hong Kong of the night like in *Days of Being Wild* (1990). I walk along the tents of face readers outside **Temple Street's Night Market**. They beckon urgently, promising to reveal my fortune—in English. If I could, I'd tell them I'd found it on a treasure hunt on an island, by a fragrant harbour in the South China Sea.★

TIM HO WAN
At one of the world's cheapest Michelin-starred restaurants, dim sum costs ₹175 and shared tables make meals sweeter. Their star dish? Baked bun with barbecued pork: sweet-crust bun falling apart to reveal pork filling, spreading joy.

FIRE DRAGON DANCE
300 performers. 24,000 incense sticks. A 22-foot dragon. For three nights during the Mid-Autumn Festival in September, the hood of Tai Hang becomes a spectacle of epic proportions. Participants carry the incense dragon, dancing to a frenzy of drums, lighting up the night.

ESSENTIALS

Direct flights connect Delhi, Mumbai, and Bengaluru to Hong Kong. Fill up a pre-arrival registration form for a visa-free stay for up to 14 days *(www.immd.gov.hk)*. The Airport Express and buses are the best ways to get to Hong Kong Island and Kowloon.

TIP Get an Octopus card for hassle-free metro travel *(HKD150/₹1,335; including refundable deposit worth HKD50/₹445)*.

KIRPMUN/SHUTTERSTOCK (DIM SUM), FRANCOIMAGE/SHUTTERSTOCK (DRAGON)
FACING PAGE: JONAS GRATZER (RITUAL & PROMENADE)

Few places in Hong Kong are as joyful as the Kowloon Promenade (bottom), **or Wan Chai, a suburb of contrasts where everything has its place, be it nightclubs, malls, or practitioners of traditional Chinese rituals under flyovers** (top).

JONAS GRATZER

BOOKS

Sleuthing for NOSTALGIA

Travelling through Calcutta's golden past in the footsteps of Satyajit Ray's young detective

BY RUMELA BASU
ILLUSTRATION BY RAJIB DAS

First manufactured in 1957 by Hindustan Motors in Kolkata, the Ambassador taxis of the city are just as iconic as its British-era buildings.

DINODIA PHOTO/CORBIS/GETTY IMAGES

The obelisk on the grave of William Wordsworth—an officer in the British army, not the Romantic—in Kolkata's **South Park Street Cemetery**, would have worn a lighter cloak of moss on the June morning of 1977 when Feluda, Topshe and their funny writer friend Lalmohan Babu walked past it to check out a crime scene. That's my first thought as I enter the cemetery, fresh out of a reread of Satyajit Ray's "Gorosthaney Sabdhan" ("The Secret of the Cemetery").

Pradosh Chandra Mitter aka Feluda, Ray's *bhadrolok* detective with sparkling wit, and an appetite for **Nizam's** rolls and Charminar cigarettes, is every Bengali kid's superhero. Feluda and his cousin-cohort Topshe can be called the travelling detectives. Their adventures span from the deserts of Rajasthan to the mountains of Nepal, and even London and Hong Kong. Yet the Mitters and Lalmohan Babu, who goes by the pen name Jatayu, are quintessential Calcutta folk.

In Ray's world, the Mitters lived at an imaginary address on the very real Rajani Sen Road in the Jodhpur Park area. Today, its gulmohar and peepul-

lined lanes slumber wrapped in elderly art deco bungalows. Their strange cases: car chases through Lansdowne in "Golokdham Rahashya" ("The Mysterious Tenant"); meeting dodgy doppelgängers at Hogg Market in "Joto Kando Kathmandute" ("The Kathmandu Caper"); looking for old family portraits in the now-closed, almost 200-year-old Bourne & Shepherd photo studio; or following suspects to Park Street auction houses in "Indrajal Rahashya" ("Magical Mystery"), offer an interesting glimpse of Calcutta of the 1960s and '70s.

My Feluda adventure begins at the gates of the over 250-year-old South Park Street Cemetery, entering which feels like crossing over to another era. Standing by the white marble tombstone of poet and reformer Henry Louis Vivian Derozio, I know what Topshe meant by the "sound of traffic going down Park Street" blotting out here. Instead, the tree-covered burial grounds rustle with sounds of scampering squirrels, hooting birds, and truant college students swapping ghost stories.

While every Kolkata mystery unravels a different chapter of the city, "Gorosthaney Sabdhan" is a unique journey. In this story, "Feluda's latest passion was Calcutta." It starts with **Fancy Lane**, an L-shaped street right by St. John's Church in what is today's "office *para*." Where now I find old offices and shops, there once stood a podium for public hangings or *phashi* in Bengali. Like many other words—even surnames—in Bengal, the street's name changed to echo the Englishmen's pronunciation. The story debuting Lalmohan Babu's second-hand Mark 2 Ambassador took me on a ride through a city in transition. In Feluda's Calcutta, street names are changing—the British-appointed Dalhousie Square declared B.B.D. Bagh after freedom fighters—

The 250-year-old South Park Street Cemetery (top) **chronicles many stories of Calcutta's Englishmen; The historical St. John's Church, which houses Warren Hasting's first office, is as colourful as its stained glass windows** (bottom left)**; At the Feluda-themed Abar Baithak café in Jodhpur Park** (bottom right)**, you can relish hot chocolate along with Ray's works.**

RUMELA BASU (CEMETRY & CAFÉ), M AMIRTHAM/DINODIA PHOTO/DINODIA PHOTO LIBRARY (STAINED-GLASS)

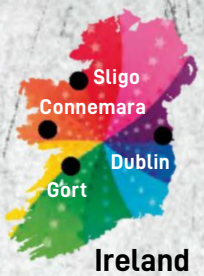
and what was a glorious capital city is now fraught with Naxal tension and socio-political unrest. But at no point can the history of his city be undermined, Feluda tells Topshe leading him to the cloudy white tomb of Job Charnock (considered a founder of the city) in **St. John's Church.**

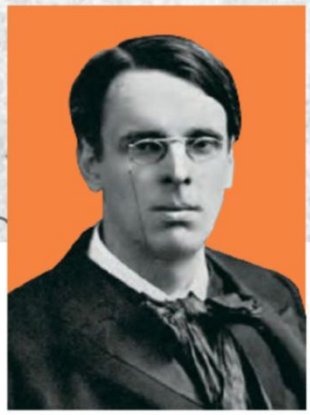
The sprawling gardened grounds of the 18th-century church, one of the first public buildings of the British capital, houses the tombstone of Lord Brabourne, Governor of Bengal and Bombay and Viceroy of India, alongside war memorials of events seldom spoken of, such as the tragedy of Calcutta's Black Hole Prison, where over 100 British and Anglo-Indian soldiers and Indian civilians imprisoned by Siraj ud-Daulah died. I also spot a monument for British soldiers lost to the Second Rohilla War. Feluda had helped Topshe read the Latin inscription on Job Charnock's tomb, but I stay for the music of the church's 19th-century pipe organ.

Tangled in a delicious time warp, I arrive at a little shop called **Ananda** in Gariahat to buy my first copy of a Feluda graphic novel ("Golapi Mukta Rahashya" or "The Mystery of the Pink Pearl") published by store's press in the 2000s. The bold watercolour illustrations, a refreshing spin on

Ray's own sketches, alerts me to the city's perennial chaos. Easy to hate, easy to love. Soon, I am looking at a wall art of Feluda's nemesis Maganlal Meghraj at **Abar Baithak** café sipping on Tinkori Babur Hot Chocolate in the detective's backyard, Jodhpur Park. I know I'll be out again, sleuthing for stories. May be I'll run into more dazzling tales from the past, or even better, an adventure-in-waiting.

BOOKS





By Sohini Das Gupta

AN IRISH AMBLE

Scouting for poetry in W.B. Yeats's Ireland

The rugged jade landscape of Connemara, where W.B. Yeats spent his honeymoon, was a great influence; A striking, life-like sculpture of the poet in Sligo (bottom).

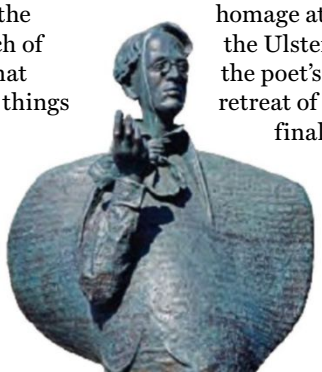
William Butler Yeats, 20th century's literary Goliath from Ireland, made no bones about his love for magic ("The world is full of magic things, waiting for our senses to grow sharper.") and mystique (*Come away, O human child!/To the waters of the wild/With a faery, hand in hand...*). One might struggle to size up his literary aesthetics as Romantic or Modernist—much of his work is meditative, much of it political, and even more, vehemently in between—but what remains uncontested is Ireland's pride of place as his inspiration. Whether in his homesick ode to Sligo's Innisfree island ("The Lake Isle of Innisfree"), idealised while trudging the "grey pavements" in London, or in his fractured reaction to the "terrible beauty" of the nationalist Easter Rising ("Easter, 1916"), Ireland's footprints in the Yeatsian psyche are as tangible as Yeats's own across Ireland.

For lovers of the Dublin-born poet, the city's **Abbey Theatre** is a good gateway to the trail. Ireland's national theatre, co-founded by Yeats and radical thinker Lady Gregory in 1904, has over the years seen many definitive moments of the country's cultural revival. The electric hubbub from its early days of hosting plays by Oscar Wilde, J.M. Synge and Sean O'Casey survives, as a mix of classic and contemporary pieces continue to be staged even today. Do not skip the **National Library of Ireland,** with its vast reservoir and frequent exhibitions of Yeats's literature.

While **Gort** in Galway houses the poet's summer home **Thoor Ballylee,** and the verse-inspiring green shadows of **Coole Park**, a trip to **Connemara** promises the soft melancholia of Irish countryside that haunted Yeats forever.

But it is in **Sligo**, where the Nobel Laureate spent much of his childhood summers, that one can deep-dive into all things Yeats. Scour the rocky reaches of **Knocknarea** for the legends of Queen Maeve, or marvel at stone circles, dolmens and passage tombs strewn aroundthe **Carrowmore Megalithic Cemetery**—one of Europe's largest Stone Age graveyards. That is to not forget the watery isle of **Innisfree**, immortalised as the place "where peace comes dropping slow."

At the Sligo Town Centre, you'll be mapping frantically to squeeze in time at the **Yeats Memorial Building,** or pay homage at the poet's statue in front of the Ulster Bank building. Between the poet's neoclassical holiday retreat of **Lissadell House** and his final resting place at **Drumcliff Churchyard**, Sligo sings of the "bitter sweetness" of Yeat's life, and beyond.



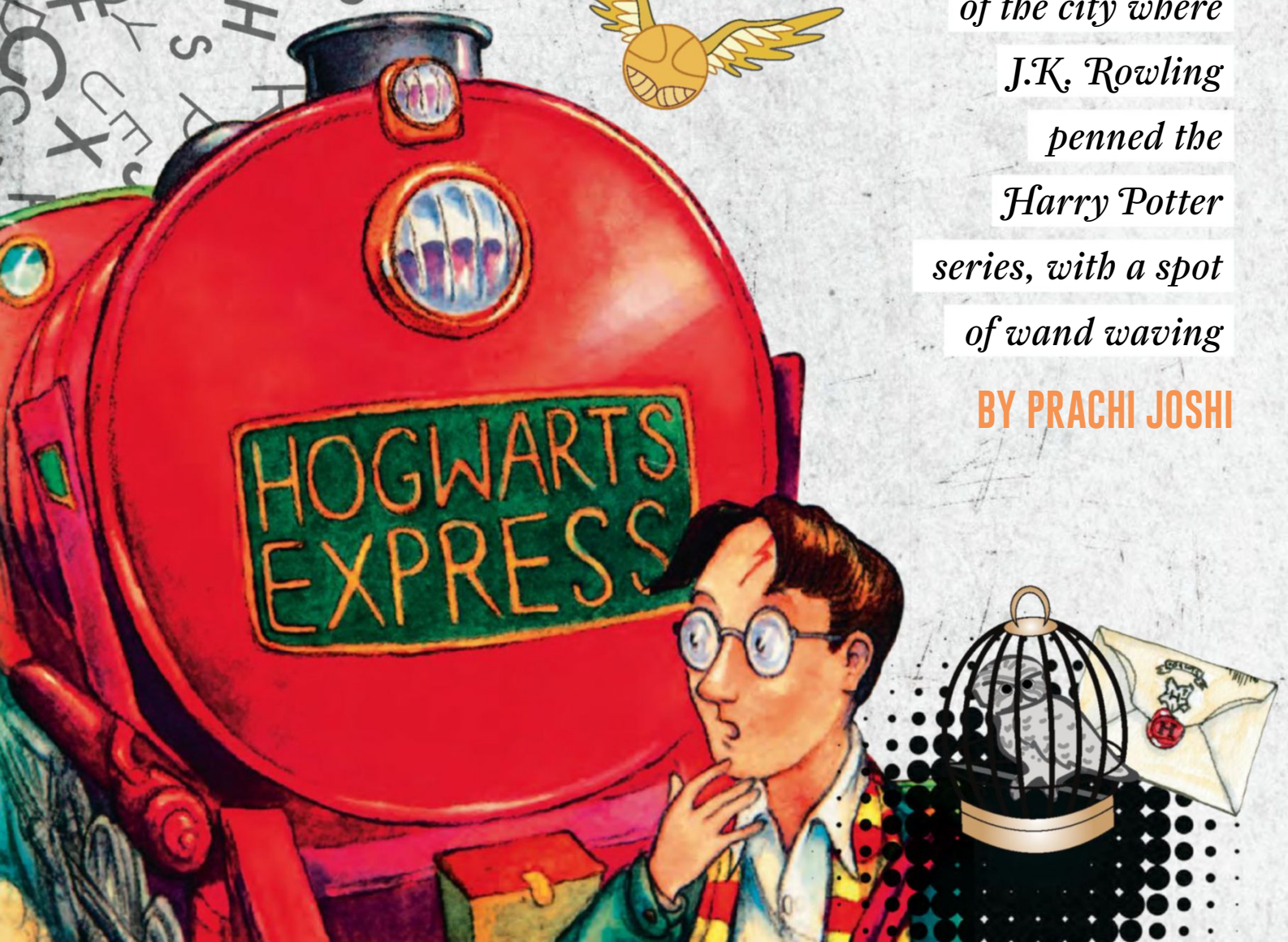
THE PRINT COLLECTOR/ALAMY/INDIAPICTURE (W.B. YEATS), OSCAR ELIAS/ALAMY/INDIAPICTURE (BOOK), AURELIEN POTTIER/MOMENT/GETTY IMAGES (HORSES), DESIGN PICS/THE IRISH IMAGE COLLECTION/DESIGN PICS/GETTY IMAGES (BUST)

BOOKS

Alohomora, EDINBURGH

A magical tour of the city where J.K. Rowling penned the Harry Potter series, with a spot of wand waving

BY PRACHI JOSHI



The Potter Trail takes you atop the terrace of Victoria Street which inspired Diagon Alley.

PHOTO COURTESY: POTTER TRAIL (STREET), LATYPOVA DIANA/SHUTTERSTOCK (WAND)
FACING PAGE: FLAB/ALAMY/INDIAPICTURE (COVER), KIND IMAGES/SHUTTERSTOCK (HAT), VIK CG/SHUTTERSTOCK (MAGIC ICONS), KIND IMAGES/SHUTTERSTOCK (LETTER)

Rossio lumos," says our guide, Will, pointing his wand at the traffic light, and sure enough, it changes from red to green. It is a variation of the spell I am familiar with from the books, but, hey, it works. "Just a bit of magic in the Muggle world," Will smiles and walks ahead, while we follow him dutifully across the street. It's mid-June and the first sunny day of our Scottish summer trip. My husband and I are in Edinburgh and we have just joined some 40-odd people for a Potter Trail (a walking tour of the same name) through the city. Will is appropriately decked out in a Hogwarts robe and carries a wand. With his round framed glasses and boyish looks the resemblance to Harry Potter/Daniel Radcliffe is uncanny, only the lightning scar is missing. I see a few young cloak-clad witches and wizards wearing their house colours in our motley group. I'm surprised to see so many Hufflepuffs; I'm a proud Gryffindor myself.

GRAVE MATTERS

For any Potterhead, Edinburgh is a Mecca of magic. It is in a café here that J.K. Rowling started penning the biggest pop culture phenomenon of our times. Being a Potterhead myself, the Harry Potter trail was naturally on my agenda when we visited the city last year. We arrive at the meeting point in front of the Greyfriar's Bobby statue in the city centre to find several people milling about already. Will arrives promptly at noon and we set off towards **Greyfriars Kirkyard**, a graveyard surrounding Greyfriars Kirk (church) where burials have been taking place

since the late 16th century. With its sombre air and numerous monumental tombstones, the graveyard looks very much like the one where Harry Potter and Voldemort battle it out at the end of the Triwizard Tournament in book four, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. "This is where Lord Voldemort is buried," Will announces dramatically as he leads us to the far end of the graveyard and points out a tombstone. "Sacred to the memory of Thomas Riddell Esq. who died in Edinburgh on the 24th Novm. 1806, aged 72 years," it reads. Did Rowling get her inspiration for Tom Riddle here? It's debatable but, in the Potter universe, we take these coincidences very seriously.

On its western end, the graveyard adjoins **George Heriot's School**, a posh day school that possibly inspired the idea of Hogwarts (it very much reminds me of the wizarding school). It has a hulking sandstone façade, complete with a central tower and turrets. Will pulls out a Sorting Hat and some of the kids in the group line up to get sorted. He makes a quick judgement call, and declares the house each kid belongs to. The horror of a Hufflepuff finding out that she is, in fact, a Slytherin is very real! Before we leave the graveyard, Will points out another headstone. This one is dedicated to William McGonagall, 'poet and tragedian.' At this point, I'm convinced that if I look carefully I will even find a Dumbledore buried here.

1

WRITER'S BLOCK

From there, we make our way to **The Elephant House**, a cosy red-fronted café that proclaims itself to be the "birthplace of Harry Potter." But Will gets the facts straight. "J.K. Rowling did write Harry Potter here, but it was the second book. She wrote the first book at Nicolson's Café, which was then co-owned by her brother-in-law," he explains. Nicolson's Café is long gone, in its place is a bistro named Spoon (which incidentally serves a fantastic Sunday brunch). We meander along, making a stop at **Potterow Port**, a street by the University of Edinburgh. While there's no Harry Potter connection here (not even in the name), Will points out a pedestrian underpass that looks exactly like the tunnel where Harry and his cousin Dudley are attacked by Dementors at the beginning of book five, *Harry Potter and the*

3

4

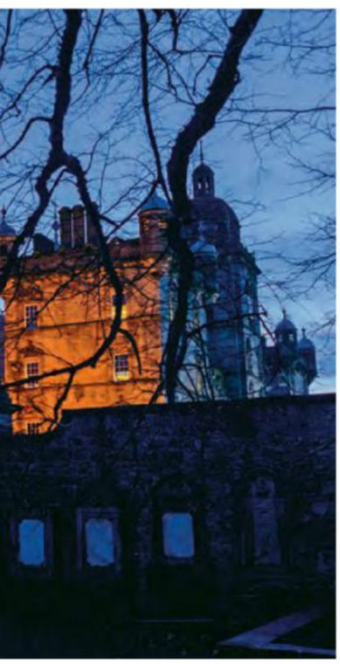
TOP STOPS

- GREYFRIARS KIRKYARD
- GEORGE HERIOT'S SCHOOL
- ELEPHANT HOUSE
- POTTEROW PORT
- VICTORIA STREET

1 Harry, Ron and Hermione in a still from the first movie. 2 The gravestone of Thomas Riddell is a popular spot in Greyfriars Kirkyard. 3 J.K. Rowling frequented cafés in Edinburgh for their free heating when she wrote the Harry Potter series in the 1990s. 4 The 17th-century Gothic facade of George Heriot's School was the likely inspiration for Hogwarts. 5 Potterow Port conjures images of the Dementor attack on Harry and Dudley in book five.

Order of the Phoenix. We end our tour at **Victoria Street**, a sweeping crescent street built in the early 19th century and flanked by colourful buildings with tall, arched windows. The street is lined with independent shops. My mind instantly conjures up an image of Diagon Alley—Victoria Street is said to have inspired Rowling to create the magical lane. Now, if only I could spot the Leaky Cauldron, I wouldn't mind a drink. Or two.

We settle for a coffee at The Elephant House. Bidding goodbye to Will, we make our way back and get a table in the backroom. The window overlooks Greyfriars Kirkyard, and further in the distance I see Edinburgh Castle perched on a hilltop. Rowling probably sat right here as she wrote the books and it's easy to see why Edinburgh inspired her so much. I head to the ladies' restroom which is almost entirely graffitied by fans with 'thank you' messages and quotes from the books. I draw a small Deathly Hallows sign in a corner (it's not vandalism!) and thank Rowling for bringing some magic into our world.



ESSENTIALS

The Potter Trail *(pottertrail.com)* is a free tour—tips appreciated—that typically lasts 90 minutes. Tours run daily at 12 noon & 4 p.m. from April to August and daily at 2 p.m. from September to March.

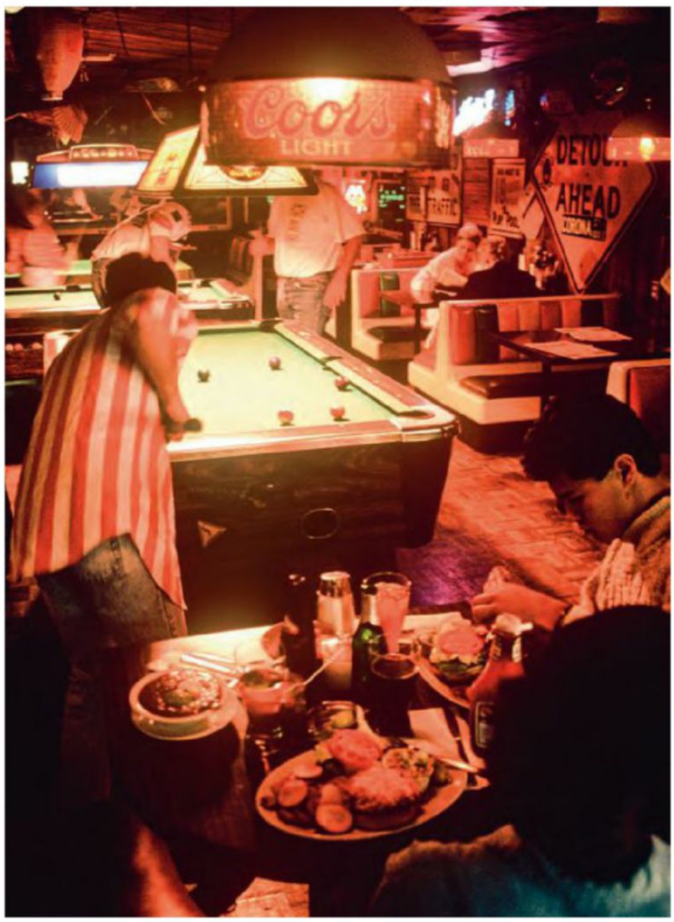
THE HOLLYWOOD ARCHIVE/DINODIA PHOTO LIBRARY (1). PHOTO COURTESY: POTTER TRAIL (2). FEATUREFLASH PHOTO AGENCY/SHUTTERSTOCK (3). RODOLFO CONTRERAS/DINODIA PHOTO LIBRARY (4). JURAJ KAMENICKY/SHUTTERSTOCK (5)

FILM

Where A STAR was born

Explore the Los Angeles eateries, suites, and museums that have kept Marilyn Monroe's memories—and stardom—alive

BY LUBNA AMIR



Stay at the Marilyn Monroe Suite at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel (left) **or grab a booth at the city's iconic Barney's Beanery** (right)**, where Monroe once dined.**

DEPOSITEPHOTOS/INDIAPICTURE (ROOSEVELT HOTEL); NIK WHEELER/ALAMY/INDIAPICTURE (POOL TABLE)
FACING PAGE: ALBUM ONLINE/INDIAPICTURE (MONROE); DEPOSITEPHOTOS/INDIAPICTURE (LOS ANGELES SIGN); R SCAPINELLO/ISTOCK EDITORIAL/GETTY IMAGES (STAR)

Even though I was born there, I still can't think of one good thing to say about it. If I close my eyes, and picture L.A., all I see is one big varicose vein," Marilyn Monroe famously said about the City of Stars. Yet, it is in Los Angeles that the Hollywood icon lived the longest, and it is here that she is interred in the **Pierce Brothers Westwood Village Memorial Park**. She passed away in 1962, but her stardom lives on, for in the Corridor of Memories there's never a lack of fresh flowers at crypt no. 24.

In her short life of 36 years, Monroe's ascent to Hollywood was meteoric—the camera both worshipped her and whittled her down. Who can ever forget the scene from *Seven Year Itch* where Monroe, flashing her million-dollar smile, standing by a subway, is holding on to a billowing white cocktail dress? An iconic pose that catapulted her into an overnight sex symbol.

Pay homage to the icon at **Hollywood Boulevard**. Go star-spotting at the **Hollywood Walk of Fame** or find her handprints outside the **TCL Chinese Theatre**. Gaze at her extravagant honeymoon dress or the bustier she posed in for *Playboy*, along with the spread, at the permanent exhibit in the **Hollywood Museum**. Eat Monroe's favourite spicy beef chilli at **Barney's Beanery**, an L.A. establishment that has been around since 1920, or grab a booth at **Rainbow Bar & Grill.** It used to be an Italian restaurant called Villa Nova during her time, and this is where Monroe met her second husband, baseballer Joe DiMaggio, on a blind date in 1952. **Formosa Café**, which Monroe frequented during the filming of *Some Like It Hot*, fashioned itself as the place "where stars dine," and they had over 250 autographed photographs of the who's who of Hollywood to back the claim. Currently closed for renovations, it's slated to be back on its feet soon.

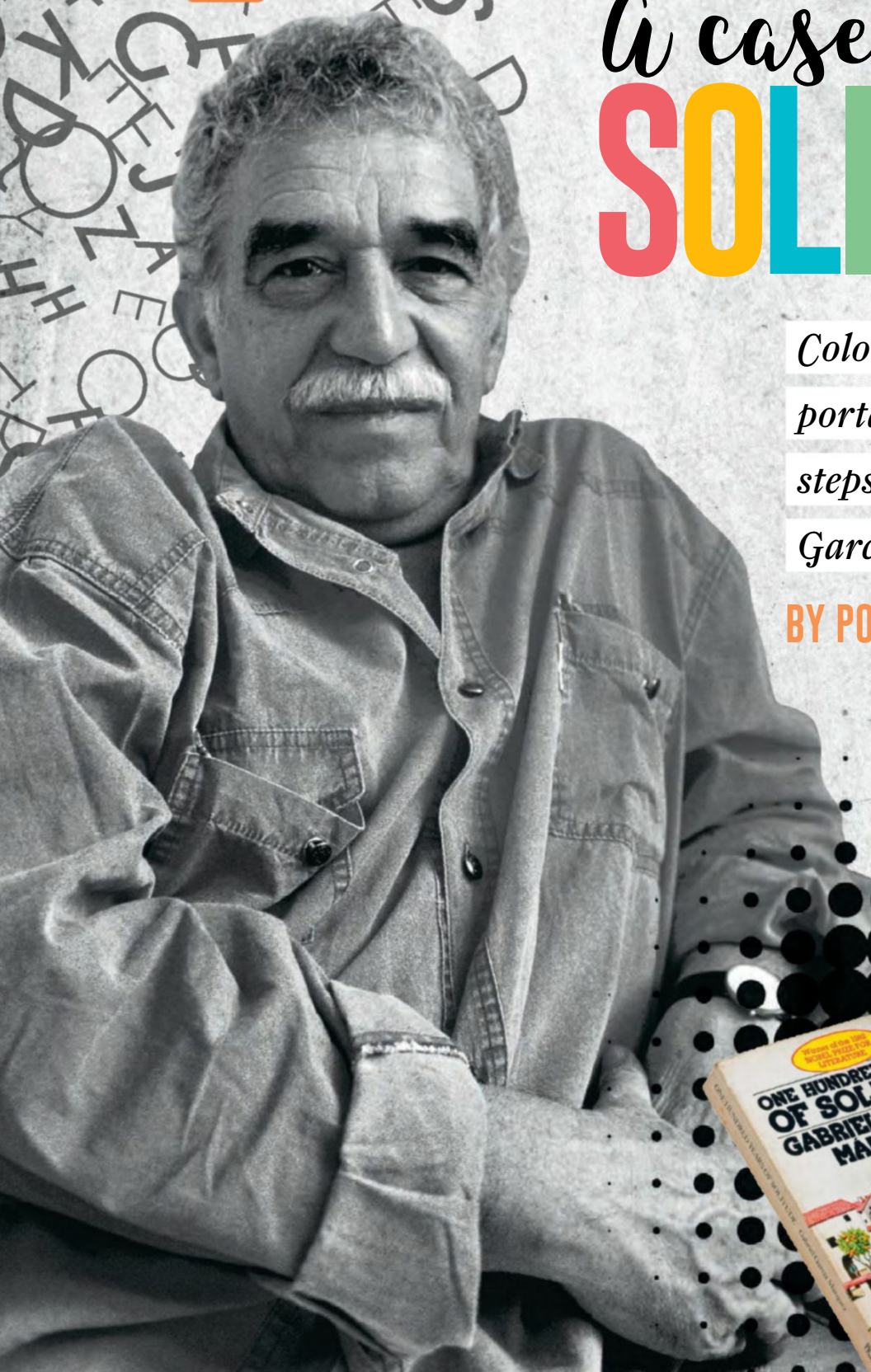
While the only house she ever bought was the one she died in, Monroe lived on and off in the city's best hotels. The **Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel** was also the site of her first big shoot; she last stayed in the **Beverly Hills Hotel and Bungalows** in 1960 during the filming of *Let's Make Love* with her third, and last, husband, Arthur Miller. What the **Charlie Hotel** is today used to be Charlie Chaplin's estate back in the day, and many struggling actors including Monroe have called it home at some point in their lives. All three hotels have bungalows and suites dedicated to the star, which any ardent fan can book, and make Instagram stories out of.

BOOKS

A case for SOLITUDE

Colombia remains a portal to the surreal steps of Gabriel García Márquez

BY POOJA NAIK



When Gabriel García Márquez wrote, his stories were dusted with magic and dripping with fantasy—yet he would look you dead in the eyes, and say, *this is real*. That was his truth; the same way his grandmother would tell him ghost stories with a stoic face and deadpan tone; the way life slithered from the absurd to the abnormal, always anchored in reality. His style not only championed his native Colombia's spirit, but bolstered the narrative of life in Central and South America, which many struggle to explain, and very few managed to depict.

The sleepy, northern **Mompós**, officially Santa Cruz de Mompox, served as a backdrop for *One Hundred Years of Solitude,* which fetched Gabo a Nobel Prize. Bearing resemblance to the fictional Macondo, this UNESCO site is but a crumbling colonial town situated amid swamps with mango trees and secluded wooden huts on stilts. It is where blue Caribbean waters meet the murky Magdalena River, the longest in the country. It is a portal to the late writer's lifelong obsession with the river dating back to 1943, when he embarked on a luxury steamboat—the David Arango—at 15. A walk down the nearly 500-year-old cobbled streets of Mompós catches sights of mouldering facades, mansions, and colourful churches. In the evenings, the plaza in front of **Santo Domingo Church** fills with food stalls and recordings of classical music. Owing to boutique hotels and restaurants, this gem is slowly finding its way into limelight.

A further 240 kilometres northward, tucked in the Sierra Nevada, lies Gabo's birthplace, **Aracataca,** generally hailed as a more popular contender for Macondo. Murals of the author and Remedios, a character of beauty so enchanting that she ascended to heaven, sprawl across the quarters. A tour of **Casa Museo Gabriel García Márquez**, a remarkable reconstruction of Gabo's childhood home, holds his typewriter and dictionary. A walk through **El Carmen** where yellow butterflies flutter, reveals a tombstone erected to honour Melquiades, the visionary gypsy of the novel. Aesthetically, there isn't much to see, but it is a one-stop destination for diehard Márquez fans as the essence of Gabo awaits visitors at every turn.

Yet, perhaps **Cartagena** remains the most fantastical destination on this trail, rich in history and ripe with romanticism. It is the stuff of Caribbean fantasies as well as the city that launched Gabo's trajectory as a writer. Having arrived as a penniless student from Bogotá, he later maintained a sea-facing house in the **San Diego quarter** to which he returned every year. Opposite his abode sits the famed **Sofitel Santa Clara** hotel, which the writer frequented for a drink. Back in the day when he was a journalist and the hotel was a hospital, the author learnt about the discovery of a skeleton of a young girl with long copper hair. Fiction swirled with truth and she became a 12-year-old Marquis' daughter sent for exorcism

in the acclaimed *Of Love and Other Demons*. At **Plaza Fernández de Madrid**, lanes are festooned with flower-speckled balconies. This setting of a bench-filled park of young lovers entwined in each other's arms took shape of Park of the Evangels in *Love in the Time of Cholera*.

In any city that brims with life and character, Gabo would have had no trouble seeking stories.

The colourful setting of Cartagena (top) **launched Márquez's writing stint; The movie-set-like Mompós** (bottom) **served as a backdrop for the setting of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.**

KAROL KOZLOWSKI/ROBERTHARDING/COLLECTION MIX: SUBJECTS/GETTY IMAGES (WOMAN), ANTHONY ASAEL/ALAMY/INDIAPICTURE (HORE CARRIAGE)
FACING PAGE: GRAZIANO ARICI/AGEFOTOSTOCK/DINODIA PHOTO LIBRARY (MÁRQUEZ), CBW/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO/INDIAPICTURE (WHITE BOOK),
SJBOOKS/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO/INDIAPICTURE (RED BOOK)

ART

Barefoot In South BOMBAY

The city has changed, but some of M.F. Husain's Mumbai still remains. We slip into the shoes of the modernist to map out his favourite backyard addas

BY HUMAIRA ANSARI

DINODIA PHOTOS/[illegible] (PAIN), LEVENTINCE/E+/GETTY IMAGES (PAINT)
FACING PAGE: DINODIA PHOTOS/AMAN STUDIO PHOTO/INDIAPICTURE (PAINTING), BABAYUKA/SHUTTERSTOCK (ILLUSTRATION), SNEHAL JEEVAN PALKAR (MUMBAI SIGN BOARD)

Canopied by clouds pregnant enough to deliver the season's first showers, Colaba Causeway doesn't reach a quarter of its usual cacophony when I drive down Thursday morning.

Hunched by the kerbside, I see owners of tiny stalls busy sorting supplies they'll shortly upsell to unassuming tourists, in Hinglish, or even amusingly accented Arabic.

They're also preparing (mentally) for the overzealous teenagers who'll troupe down to bargain their pocket money's worth for fake Ray Bans, Levi's surplus and Zara rejects.

Two kilometres from here is Cuffe Parade. Built on reclaimed land, the uber-plush locality is where Maqbool Fida Husain resided, a gradual but substantial upgrade from the communal chawls of Badr Baug in Grant Road. His bold, progressive interpretations of primordial Indian mythology had stirred both his fortunes and the art world, earning him accolades aplenty.

India's Picasso, Padma Bhushan, Padma Vibhushan and what not.

Across the street from here, wedged within the ground floor of the grey-stoned, Victorian-era Rehem Mansion, is also **Olympia Coffee House & Stores**, a Muslim Chilia-run restaurant, an instituition of sorts, where the nattily dressed painter often culminated his morning walks. Mostly with Munna Javeri, a friend who still lives six buildings from where Husain once did.

It's peak breakfast hours when I walk in and most customers seem to be regulars, much like Husain was through the '90s. A menu isn't offered, nor is one needed. Not today. Straight up I order M.F. Husain's morning muses. Keema, with pav. Eggs, sunny side up. Chai, half a cup. A full cuppa, I recently learnt, was never his cup of tea.

Ashraf had guided me in minutes ago. He wore a skull-cap, his pajamas ending above his ankle (a trademark of the Muslim Chilia community he belongs to). Of the four chairs circling the white-mélange marbled table, I had deliberately occupied one from where I could see, and savour, the place's pulse, a vantage point the Pandharpur-born painter always preferred while eating out.

I consume the commotion, with my heart set on the salad plate piled high with half a dozen lime wedges, their yolk-yellow peel indicative of a juicy yield (I can't wait to squeeze them over keema). Like puppeteers, the two men behind the cake-and-bun-brimming counters are controlling everything; one trrriiiing of their call bells sets off waiters in a tizzy, their forearms balancing up to three porcelain plates.

Buttered, tutti-frutti-filled buns being dipped in milky chai on the table beside mine makes me yearn for my food triply more. I finish the peas-and-dill-sprinkled keema, both portions, fairly quickly, and as soon as I am done, Ashraf brings me my bill, a measly 350 rupees for a kingly meal, and all that lemon.

Facing page: **M.F. Husain's indelible (foot)print lays engraved inside Joy Shoes** (bottom right), **his friend Munna's shoe store in Mumbai's Taj Mahal Palace hotel, which he also redesigned. Across the corridor from here, at Golden Dragon** (bottom left) **he forked through pan-fried noodles, before embracing Mumbai's streets** (top) **for morning walks, gallery visits, and post-meal paan.**

As I stand sluicing the grease off my hands with the Daliesque pink blobs of Lifebuoy melting in the soap dish under the "Wash Basin," my stomach tingles at the knowledge that Husain too once stood here, rinsing oil off his gnarled fingers, like he must have after mixing oil and paint.

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It's half past 10 in the night but when I see the WhatsApp call come in, I answer at the first ring, simultaneously grabbing my notebook and the closest pen in sight.

Just 10 minutes ago he'd acknowledged my SMS with "I am on a cruise in Alaska. Anything urgent?" Knowing how slim my chances were then, I had simply replied, it's about M.F. Husain.

That's all it took.

Within seconds Munna Javeri is on the line, willing to entertain a travel writer whilst travelling to Alaska no less, just because a rock-solid, 38-year-old friendship must be honoured, across continents, beyond time zones, nine years after his buddy breathed his last in a London hospital.

Winding his memory back to those times, Munna lists their addas, all in south Mumbai, all eating establishments.

Well, he loved good food and "he definitely knew where to grab a good bite," Munna says, his tone, despite the dodgy cellular network, is filled with pride, showing off how his friend was in on it "...*chilia*, chaat places, five-star fine diners, he knew them all. Partially also because in the days when he was painting Bollywood posters and making wooden toys, he ate out a lot."

***

Treasuring the gems Munna had so ebulliently expressed, the next morning I set out. Stepping into the shoes of an artist who never wore a pair, I visit spots he did, sampling fare his dexterous fingers had once made morsels out of, talking to owners, waiters and anybody really who remembers anything Husain...

... barefooted, tinted retro specs resting on the bridge of his long nose, a trademark of the Sulaimani Bohra community he belonged to.

***

Stadium Restaurant, near Churchgate Station, was another favourite the two frequented, a Muslim Irani-run establishment, different from the Parsi Irani cafés.

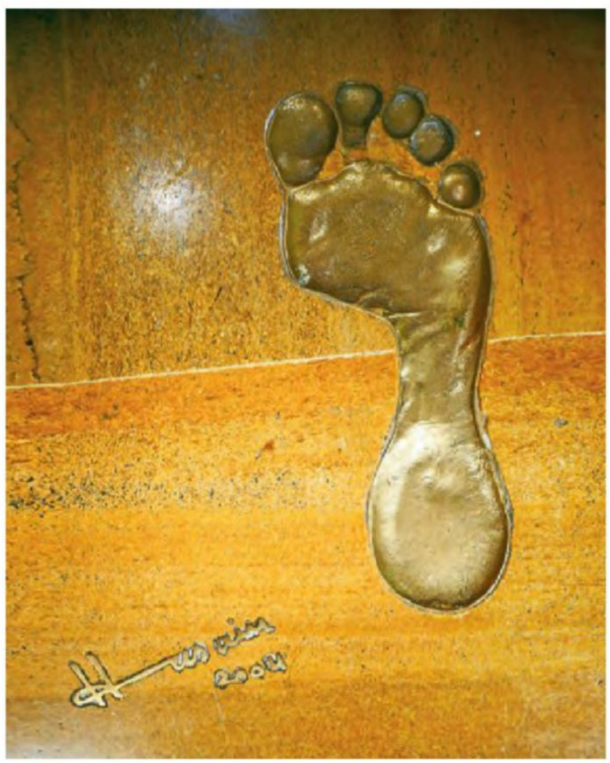
The furniture is basic and the weathered walls could really use a Husain. My mind veers off to a signed sketch framed inside **Noor Mohammedi**, featuring (unsurprisingly) a horse, the sun dazzling to the stallion's right, something in Urdu scribbled inside it. It was an impulsive gift to a place whose *paya* Husain occasionally slurped up.

Such spontaneously done drawings were his reward, his rating, his hefty tip, to places he liked, be it restaurants or random paanwallahs.

Inside Stadium though, waiters barely ever smile, a trait that seems to have trickled down from the top, for my attempt to extract anything Husain of the man behind the counter fails gloriously. All I get is a stern, "Don't waste your time, madam."

It's 9.30 on a weekday morning and I've little time to waste. Retreating to my seat, once again, I order keema pav. It pales

FACING PAGE: XEDRASZAK/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES (STREET), TAJ MAHAL PALACE, MUMBAI (RESTAURANT), JULIAN MANNING (FOOTPRINT)



in comparison with what I'd polished off at Olympia. But the bun *maska* isn't bad, my colleague, who's just finished breakfast, assures.

Before exiting I smile at the fair, middle-aged gentleman. A fruitless pursuit though. Hair dyed and parted like Jitendra, both his features and the folds on his forehead remind me of Mehbooba Mufti; his frown lines just won't thaw.

Conceding defeat, I move on.

With still some time left until my next appointment, I decide to peek into **Joy Shoes**. Munna's shoe shop in Colaba's Taj Mahal Palace was redesigned by Husain—evidently. His signed footprint, engraved in Egyptian gold, is the second thing you'll notice when you enter Joy Shoes. The first is a Husain hallmark—two galloping horse sculptures guarding the marbled entrance like glorified *dvarapalas*.

Inside, the pops of olive and orange stand out, like they do in Sprinkling Horses, whose sharp, cubist strokes fetched an astronomical $1.14 million at a Christie's New York auction in 2011, the same year the modernist passed, at 95, still painting.

Childlike in spirit, age was barely a deterrent for the artist who was driven away to Dubai by Hindu hardliners for his nude renditions of Hindu goddesses. Burning his effigies, they accused Husain of hurting their sentiments. If anything, I'd imagine, it was the other way around; his pining to return was palpable. It's a pity he couldn't.

Yet despite Mumbai's evolution, Husain's Bombay remains.

At least some of it.

Joy Shoes is also where he'd show up at lunchtime for Munna. They'd take off, sometimes not farther than **Golden Dragon**, the fine dining restaurant across the corridor. "Pan-fried noodles with shredded chicken was his standard order," says Sarfaraz Deshmukh, who waited Husain's table.

He ate, hobnobbed, and even painted for hours at the Taj. At its coffee shop **Shamiana**, Anil Baban Chaskar remembers Husain's fingers deftly colouring the canvas plucked out of his jhola, halting only to sip the fresh lime soda he'd served him.

He had a massive soft spot for chaat too, and for that he'd dash off to **Swati Snacks** in Tardeo; also my next stop.

"I remember seeing him almost every other Sunday," says Asha Jhaveri, owner of the mid-sized, wildly popular vegetarian restaurant that even non-vegetarians rave about. "He'd come with Munna. He'd also bring his family," Asha, dressed in a yellow tunic and black capris, seated on a table across, says, trying to scratch her memory for more but then again, like she says, "It's a story from many years ago."

As I sit people-watching, Asha glides into the kitchen to recreate items Husain had, for me to eat and for my companion to photograph. Across the glass panel, I can see her conduct the chefs, their white toques bobbing as they put sev to puri.

A little while later two sunshine yellow plates arrive. We try the sev and dahi-*batata* puris, and devour the *panki*. Indigestion being a concern, Husain particularly relished this mildly spiced rice flour preparation, wrapped and steamed in banana leaf, peeling its yellow bits off the green leaf, slowly and carefully.

***

Calcutta *meetha*. No *tambaku*. That's how Husain Sahib liked his paan," recalls Jagat Narayan Singh in Hindi so pure, so neta-like, I take a few extra seconds to process.

Husain often stopped by at **Volga Pan House** in Fort, sometimes thrice in a single day.

On a scorching weekday afternoon when I visit, Singh, now a portly paanwallah probably in his 50s, is seated on a wooden plank jutting out of his tiny paan shop, one leg folded up, the other dangling down, inches above his *chappals*. He lords over like Ganesha on an assortment of spinach-green betel leaves, some desiccated coconut and a mound of slacked lime, piled high in tin containers that have seen better days.

It isn't peak hour. He's got time to indulge. "He mostly came in a *kaali peeli*. Same, no *chappal*. Pop his paan and leave after some *baat cheet* (a quick chat)," he recounts, voice dripping nostalgia. What'd they talk about? "Just. Everyday things." When I coax for content or context, slightly miffed, he shoots a sharp "*Gharelu they, bhai* (He was like family)," response at me. I gulp down this (over) familiarisation claim with my very own *Calcutta meetha*.

This isn't my first time here, though. I usually drop in past midnight, when people wait in parcels, scattered outside an establishment that has for years drawn the many characters that make Mumbai's canvas so unique, so colourful. Families in SUVs after full on meals; tipsy youngsters spilling out of nearby pubs; young boys, their gossamer-thin moustaches freshly broken, cracking their lungs over loosely bought cigarettes.

Essentially then, for the price of a pan, you get a taste of a city...

... a city that Husain migrated to from Indore to make it big, a city that chased him away but has also kept his memories alive.

Tug at the heartstrings of people the maestro rendezvoused with and the anecdotes come to life—bold, brisk, beautiful, like the strokes immortalised in Husain's paintings.

TOP STOPS

- OLYMPIA COFFEE HOUSE & STORES
- STADIUM RESTAURANT
- TAJ MAHAL PALACE
- SWATI SNACKS
- VOLGA PAN HOUSE

Medium rare steaks at the shuttered Zodiac Grill; delish dahi puris at Swati Snacks (bottom right); ***bun-maska*** (bottom left) **at Stadium Restaurant; chai, the cup always half-filled, at Olympia Coffee House & Stores: Husain hearted good food, eaten in the company of good friends, like this Eid luncheon** (top) **in Badr Baug, a modest chawl he once resided in.**

DINODIA PHOTO/DINODIA PHOTO LIBRARY (HUSAIN); JULIAN MANNING (CHAI & DAHI PURI)

POKÉMON

Catch 'em all IN TOKYO

In the Japanese capital, you don't chase Pokémon, they chase you, in malls, inside gaming arcades and at cafés where even the crockery is Pokémon-themed

BY LUBNA AMIR

Tokyo's Akihabara district sports neon shades, and is a haven for fans of manga.

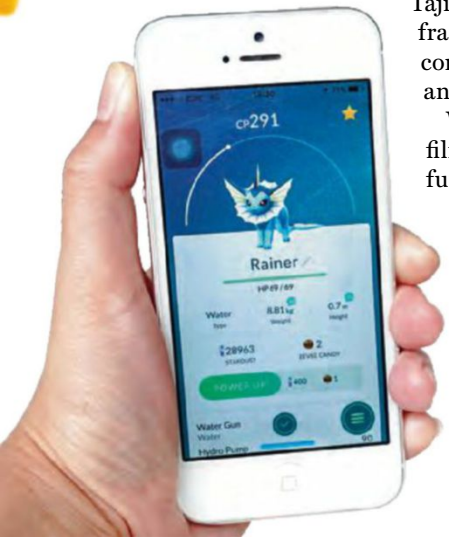
SEANPAVONEPHOTO/ISTOCK EDITORIAL/GETTY IMAGES (PHONE), ENCHANTEDFAIRY/ ISTOCK EDITORIAL/GETTY IMAGES (TOKYO)
FACING PAGE: CATLANE/ ISTOCK UNRELEASED/GETTY IMAGES (PIKACHU), HANNARI_ELI/SHUTTERSTOCK (FOOD), CRISHANU/SHUTTERSTOCK (BALL)

IMAX seats taken. Popcorn tub in hand. 3D glasses on. I'm all set for *Pokémon Detective Pikachu*.

But when I see (and hear) the adorably forlorn, roly-poly Pikachu singing Pokémon's theme song on the big screen, I'm instantly transported to my Indore home, as a bespectacled little girl sitting cross-legged in front of the TV, watching a cartoon series—pardon the upcoming cliché—all nineties kids grew up watching. Beside me in the theatre, my partner is grinning non-stop. An anime devotee, he's played the video games and traded Pokémon cards; a treasure he'll hopefully unearth from the bowels of his room someday.

In Ryme City, where the movie is set, fiction favours Pokémon-human partnerships, of the *Men In Black* kind. It's a fallacious question to ask and yet I do: Where in the real world could the two coexist?

Tokyo! Where else? I end up muttering mid-movie. Japan *is* where the series was birthed. The very first video game was created by Japanese genius Satoshi Tajiri in 1995, and the multimedia franchise is still co-owned by his company Game Freak, Nintendo and Creatures Inc.



With the knowledge that the film was shot in Denver, I start a fun exercise. Replacing Denver with Tokyo, I imagine Pikachu sleuthing around in alleys redolent of Ramen, gliding in and out of Tokyo's LED-lit, ad-flashing, cloud-kissing towers. Reality, it turns out, isn't far apart. Tokyo is home to a slew of Pokémon Centres where fans troupe down to collect merchandise, play games, eat Pokémon-themed foods, and buy another limited edition something.

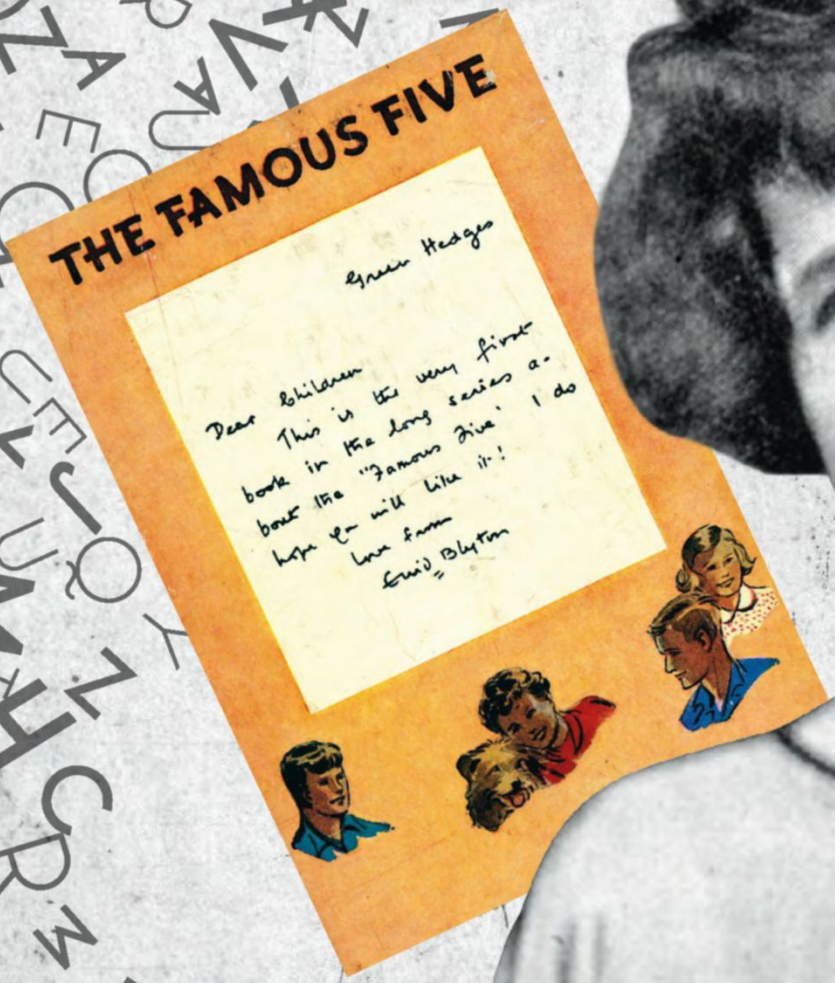
Of them, the newest and Japan's biggest, **Pokémon Center Tokyo DX**, in the trade district of Nihonbashi, is worth spending every (Poké) dollar in. Besides soft toys and card packs, there's an interactive Pokédex, and at the in-house café, food and plating both are themed. Think Cheerful Pikachu Curry with a smiling Pikachu or Snorlax Hamburger Doria with a bear-shaped patty.

At the **Pokémon Center Mega Tokyo** in Sunshine City Alpa mall, the fire-breathing, dragon-like Charizard awaits you, while Pikachu is perched on the back of the legendary dragon Rayquaza at **Pokémon Center Skytree Town**, located inside world's tallest tower. Wall-to-wall displays, latest collectibles and video games, can all be indulged in in here.

While the craze for Pokémon GO has fizzled elsewhere, the augmented reality game is still hot property in Tokyo. Shibuya and Shinjuka stations—Japan's busiest—are good places to begin your game. Want to meet fellow trainers? Head to the recently opened **P-GO Izakaya Genkinokakera** in Bunkyo City. There's even a Pokéstop and gym, so catching some (at least) is guaranteed here. Considering how I was chasing the cutesy creatures on the streets of Mumbai once, Genkinokakera is one place I'll definitely drop in, to pick up the threads, to play again.

The other would be **Akihabara**—a technicoloured paradise teeming with stores selling vintage video games, comics and trading cards. Its arena is where I imagine my partner and I brushing up our gaming skills before calling it a night at a nearby izakaya, surrendering to steaming bowls of ramen and freshly plated sushi.

BOOKS


THE FAMOUS FIVE
Dear Children
This is the very first
book in the long series a-
bout the "Famous Five" I do
hope you will like it!
Love from
Enid Blyton

the MAGIC Faraway Coast

An Enid Blyton fan goes on a trail to the wild islands, coast and castles of Dorset, where the writer set her famous books

BY SWAGATA GHOSH

MOVIESTORE COLLECTION LTD/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO/INDIAPICTURE (NODDY), GREG BALFOUR EVANS/ALAMY/INDIAPICTURE (BOOK COVER), ANDY LIDSTONE/SHUTTERSTOCK (STAMP)
FACING PAGE: MARY/INDIAPICTURE (ENID BLYTON), ANTIQUES & COLLECTABLES/ALAMY (LETTER)

I stood on the water's edge rocking urgently on my tiptoe.

Before me stretched the blue waters of Poole Bay and all around lay the countryside of county Dorset. **Brownsea Island** was a whispering distance away, near enough to make me believe I could swim there faster than any boat, yet far enough to retain all its magic. Beyond lay the 'great tree-clad mass' around which little boats gathered and yachts sailed in the wind, 'enjoying themselves in the great harbour which stretched far beyond the island.'

I was in Enid Blyton country, a corner of England she never really lived but returned every year on holiday in spring, summer and autumn throughout the 1950s and '60s. She brought with her daughters Gillian and Imogen, her second husband Kenneth and, as her stardom swelled with every book, generations of young fans from across the globe. This is where Julian, Dick and Anne visited from boarding schools on holiday, and were swept into adventure along with their cousin George and her dog Timmy in *Famous Five*. And this is where I waited for the boat to take me to 'Whispering Island.'

In Blyton's time, Brownsea was owned by Mary Bonham-Christie, whose rather eccentric idea of conservation was non-interference. She evicted the island's 200 strong residents, allowed nature to take over and kept armed guards who circled the coastline to keep visitors at bay. Soon Bonham-Christie and her island gained notoriety. Nobody quite knew what went on there. It was the perfect setting for an adventure. Blyton's imagination ran wild. Brownsea already had a castle. She added to it a 'great bed of pure gold set with precious stones, a necklace of rubies as big as pigeons' eyes, a wonderful sword with a jewelled handle worth a king's fortune' and called it Keep-Away Island. And it was here one hot summer's day fresh from their swim, the Famous Five were carried to its shores by strong undercurrents in a boat called Adventure.

Today Brownsea is a walker's delight.

Facing page: **Arriving on a steam train** (top) **to Corfe Castle like Enid Blyton first did in 1931 is half the fun; The long walk between Lulworth Cove and Durdle Door** (bottom), **running along the chalk cliffs with views of the ocean, is the highlight of any Dorset adventure.**

No cars or cycles are allowed here, but you can pack a picnic, pick up a map and set off in search of the elusive red squirrel. There are three designated walks. I picked the woodland walk past a motley group of sunbathing peahens, cockerels and a solitary sika deer by the church, and along the edge of the unprotected clifftop. Here I stopped. The bay stretched as far as the eye could see, to Studland and beyond, to Old Harry and his Wife. Old Harry is a chalk rock outcrop that rises from the seabed and is one of the finest landmarks of Dorset. Legend goes Harry Paye, an infamous Poole pirate who raided French and Spanish ships for gold and wine in late 14th century, anchored his boat behind the rocks to evade the taxmen. Until 1896, Old Harry had a Wife, standing alongside. But the wind and the ocean conspired and now all that remains of her is a chalky stump.

I pulled back from the view and continued along the cliff face. Bonham Christie's wild woods have been cleared in places and some overhanging branches cut to allow the sun to pour in through the trees. The soft red earth beneath was strewn with fallen pinecones. The wind swooped in and the trees whispered loudly. Brownsea is full of stories. In 1907, Lord Baden-Powell, a house guest with the Van Raalte family, the then owners of Brownsea, asked if he could borrow the south shore of the island to try out an idea of his. On August 1 the same year, a group of 20 boys pitched on the island, camping, training, fire lighting, cooking for a week. The Boy Scout Movement was born. More than a 100 years on, it returns every year to its birthplace. On special summer weekends you can sleep under the stars, play hopscotch with sandwich terns or red-billed oystercatchers, or watch Shakespeare in the woods.

I lingered as long as I could, stopping and staring at reed hides, past the lily pond and the remains of a vinery and returned to port for the last boat out at five. By the shore stand two **cottages** that the National Trust rent out for guests. Weekly tariffs are not cheap, but it's a storybook stay on an island crackling with adventure and untold mysteries.

The next morning I woke up in the **Isle of Purbeck**, a 20-minute boat ride from Brownsea. Purbeck is strictly not an isle, it is a peninsula that fans out into the English Channel along England's ancient Jurassic Coast. In between lie prime Blyton pastures—coastlines, coves, heaths and castles she picked on time and again for locations for her adventures in many of the *Famous Fives* and *The Rhubadub Mysteries*. Blyton often borrowed from real places and people, she changed their names of course but stuck to facts. And that is one of the beguiling charms of Dorset. If you've been a Blyton fan since the age of five, you wouldn't need a map in Dorset, for you would know every village green and every friendly bobby that stopped you on the street. Surely.

After breakfast we stopped for a paddle and ice cream on **Knoll Beach**, one of Studland's four famous and long stretches

SUNSHINE/ALAMY/INDIAPICTURE (THE SECRET OF KILLIMOOIN COVER), NEFTALI/SHUTTERSTOCK (STAMP)
FACING PAGE: FLOTSOM/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES (TRAIN), ALICE-PHOTO/ISTOCK (BEACH)

of honey-gold sand popular with both families and naturists. It was a favourite of Enid and Kenneth too. The couple returned up to four times a year to **Knoll House Hotel** overlooking breathtaking views of Studland Bay. Blyton was a creature of habit, she always took Room 40 and Table Three at dinner. Kenneth owned Isle of Purbeck Golf Club nearby, and both the club and the caddy made it to her stories.

That afternoon we left giggling children with muddy feet rock pooling around **Dancing Ledge** further west towards Kimmeridge and pushed inland into the countryside. We left the car at the coastal town of Swanage and took the train, a **steam train**. You can cycle too, but arriving at Corfe village on a steam train is half the story—the better half. And like almost all of Dorset which seems to have grown out of her books and not the other way round, the steam train to **Corfe Castle** has survived too. But it nearly never did.

In 1972, 85 years after Swanage Railway made its maiden journey, the track was closed, stripped and sold. Four years later fighting a vote in the local council the residents won back the right to rebuild their old Victorian railway. Every little detail was reconstructed from scratch—track, locomotives, carriages. It took 30 years. We arrived at Corfe Castle but lingered at the platform. The station, yellow and green, retreats into the pages of a Blyton adventure. Tall aluminium milk churns line up against the wall as if in an assembly queue. Next to them stacked high on a railway trolley are smart vintage leather suitcases, the likes you take to boarding school. The walls are covered in Victorian posters announcing the arrival of the Purbeck Breezer. The summer holidays had begun.

Corfe—the inspiration for Kirrin village in *Famous Five*—rises above the surrounding green and huddles around a square, thick with pubs and shops selling everything from books, ice creams and cream-tea. I spotted Noddy peering out of a window and go in. The shop was so busy, there was barely room to move. I turned a corner and there it was, a wall packed full of Blytons: *Mallory Towers* both old and new, *Noddy* and the *Famous Five*. Outside Kirrin village buzzes on. I had a castle to climb.

Corfe Castle had stood for a 1,000 years before Blyton first arrived here in 1931. But it's what happened after that made for a good story. As I wandered around the 'broken archways, tumbledown towers and ruined walls,' I realised that Blyton changed nothing of the details. She simply took the castle and pushed it out to sea. I kicked off my shoes and lay back on the grass. Above me hung the 'biggest, highest, widest sky I've ever seen. It's a happy place.' I closed my eyes.

Poole is an excellent base to explore the Isle of Purbeck, and its quay (top) is just the place to watch tall ships, fishing vessels and luxury yachts sail by. Facing page: A tumbledown, 1,000-year-old ruin, Corfe Castle was once a royal palace and fortress. It is now a favourite haunt of children and adults alike.

POPEXCLUSIVE/ALAMY/INDIAPICTURE (BOAT)
FACING PAGE: ALLOU/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES (HORSE)

TOP STOPS

- BROWNSEA ISLAND
- ISLE OF PURBECK
- KNOLL BEACH
- SWANAGE RAILWAY
- CORFE CASLTE

Essentials

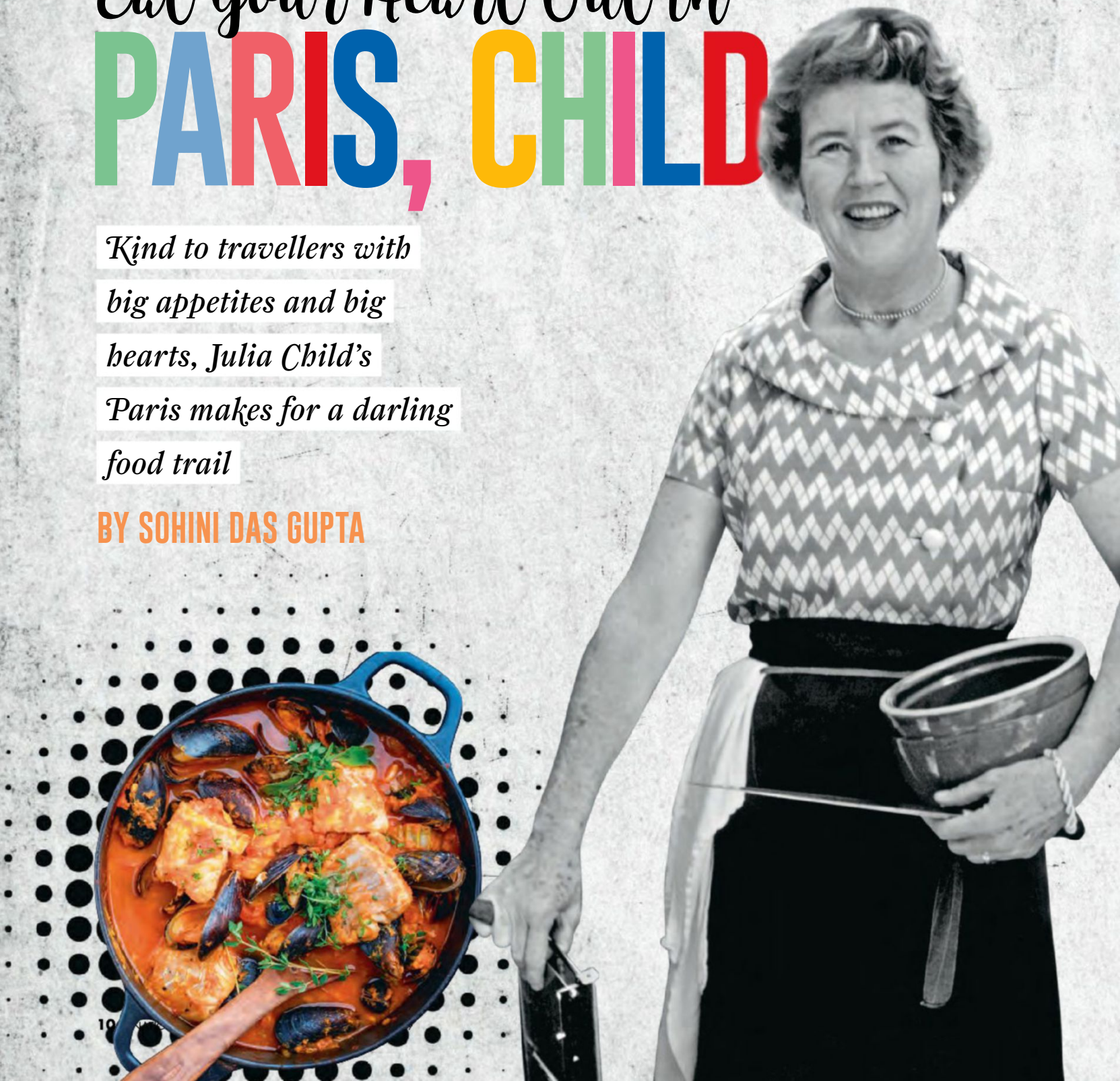
Poole is a convenient base to explore Dorset county, and lies 175 km/2.5 hr southwest of London. Most holiday spots in Dorset lie within an hour's drive from Poole. National Express buses ply regularly between London airports and the Victoria Coach Station, and most large Dorset towns *(www.nationalexpress.com)*. Trains too connect London Waterloo and Dorset stations *(www.nationalrail.co.uk)*. Boats, cars, trains and buses are all hassle-free ways to travel within Dorset.

FOOD

Eat Your Heart Out in PARIS, CHILD

Kind to travellers with big appetites and big hearts, Julia Child's Paris makes for a darling food trail

BY SOHINI DAS GUPTA



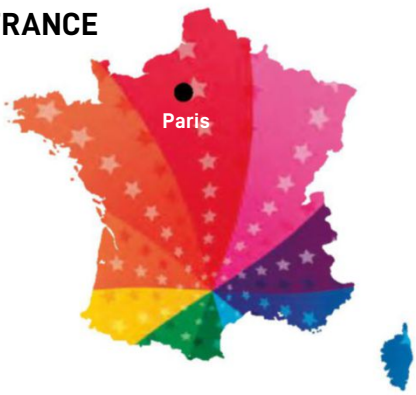
Rue Cler brims with fresh produce, boucheries and patisseries that caught Julia Child's fancy.

Pop culture has always been preoccupied with Paris. But ask a traveller with an appetite, and they'd point to the lure of fresh fruit and meat markets, to scented patisseries and kitchenware shoppes glinting with carbon steel knives, and perhaps the promise of a boeuf bourguignon—à la Julia Child. For many, there is no Paris without the American chef, author and television personality, who believed in a surplus of butter and laughter. Tracing her steps recants the great adventure with French food which hatched *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*, co-authored with friends Louisette Bertholle, and Simone Beck.

RUE DE L'UNIVERSITÉ

Really, the address is **81 rue de l'Universite**, and it houses what Julia once described as "a classic Parisian building" with a "grey cement facade, a grand front door"—this post-World War II home with husband Paul Child summed up as "a bit weird" in inimitable JC style. She nicknamed it "Roo de Loo," something one can imagine her saying out loud in the sparkling sing-song voice

COSMO CONDINA/STOCK CONNECTION/DINODIA PHOTO LIBRARY
FACING PAGE: GUY GILLETTE/SCIENCE SOURCE/DINODIA PHOTO LIBRARY (JULIA), HLPHOTO/SHUTTERSTOCK (FOOD)



that delighted viewers on PBS. A stroll around the Left Bank neighbourhood will charm your inner flâneur.

RUE CLER MARKET

About a 15-minute walk from Roo De Loo is the Rue Cler Market, its popping bazaar-colours sprinkled across the city's seventh arrondissement. Speciality shops hemmed by glass windows, cobblestone alley and French produce in bursts of red, green or yellow—Rue Cler looks the part of Julia's trusted stock-up haunt. Playing Alice might lead you to a wonderland of Brie, Brillat-Savarin and Camembert cheeses at **La Fromagerie**,

"Oh, la belle France—without knowing it, I was already falling in love!"

to delicatessens heaving with cold meat, breads and (more) cheese, or to sherbets and caramel butter ice creams at **Martine Lambert.**

E. DEHILLERIN

Since 1820, **E. Dehillerin** has been the holy grail for those who take their meat saws and mandolines seriously, its wizened aisles combed daily by connoisseurs of pestles and paella pans. It is here, at 18 et 20 rue Coquillière, that Julia came to arm her kitchen as she polished her culinary skills at **Le Cordon Bleu**.

LES DEUX MAGOTS CAFÉ

Blow on a pitcher of blazing *chocolat*

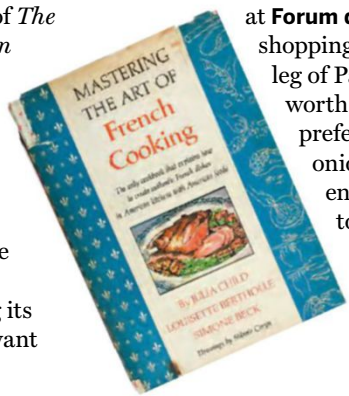
LUCIANO MORTULA - LGM/SHUTTERSTOCK (BOOKSTORE); ELLEN ROONEY/ROBERTHARDING/DINODIA PHOTO LIBRARY (CAFÉ)

Browsing the aisles of Shakespeare and Co. (top), **Child deemed the supply of French cookbooks in English inadequate; She frequented the intellectual hub of Les Deux Magots café** (bottom right); ***Mastering the Art of French Cooking*** (bottom left) **is an original in culinary literature.**

chaude as you laze at **Les Deux Magots café**, which overlooks the stately Saint-Germain-des-Prés church. You'd be tasting as much the milk-and-chocolate speciality as sheer Parisian nostalgia, for Julia and Paul's frequent coffee-and-croissant halt was also the stomping ground of intellectual elites such as Ernest Hemmingway, Jean Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir.

SHAKESPEARE AND COMPANY

Shakespeare and Company is an ode to antiquity itself—the sort of place where you are likely to pick your purchase, chance upon a first edition of *The Little Prince* or *The Velveteen Rabbit* on your way to the counter, and head home with treasures you didn't think to look for. It doesn't hurt that the likes of F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ezra Pound and James Joyce once hung out at the institution. For Julia, however, scouring its shelves only reiterated the want for a comprehensive French cookbook in English, something she went on to amend.



LES HALLES

Paris's premium fresh food market **Le Halles** could be likened to its belly—central to the city and rumbling with shoppers scouring wholesale essentials packed cheek by jowl. This was before its demolition in 1971. Apparently partial to her round-the-corner rescue of Rue Cler, Julia would have still spent ample time walking Le Halles for pig trotters or pearl onions. Brace youzelf, if you were to stand here now you'd be looking at **Forum des Halles**, a modern shopping mall. However, this leg of Paris's food map is still worth a dekko for those who prefer their history and their onion soup hot—there are enough authentic eateries to go around and it is only a short walk away from the cobblestone street market of Rue Montorgueil.

THE JOURNEY

114

ITALY: RESTLESS ALONG THE RIVIERA

Pizzas aplenty, five coastal villages, a hike, and a wonderstruck writer

O/ISTOCK EDITORIAL/GETTY IMAGES

The 340-square-kilometre reserve attracts wildlife enthusiasts to catch glimpses of feral horses, and citrine wagtail (in photo) perched on water lilies at the nearby Maguri Beel wetland.

AVIATORS OF ASSAM

AT DIBRU-SAIKHOWA NATIONAL PARK, ELUSIVE BIRDS DRAW VISITORS TO THE SWAMPY RESERVE

TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHS BY
MAYANK SONI

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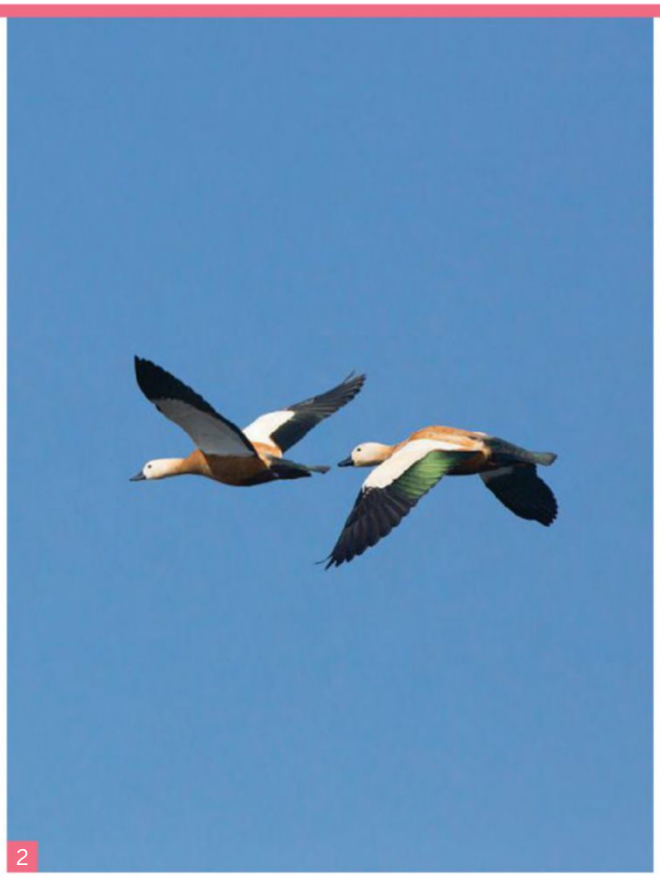

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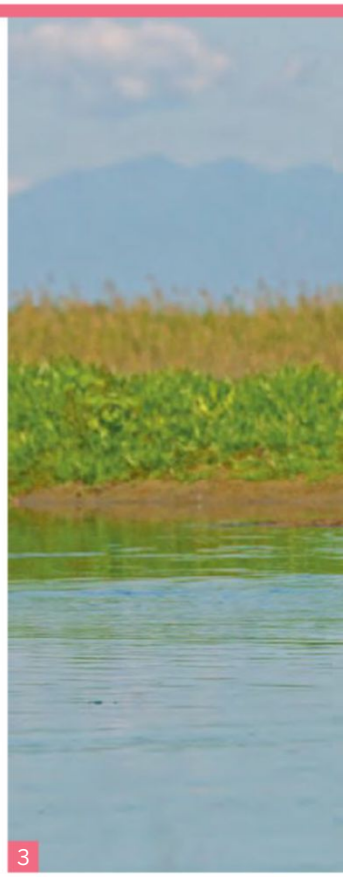

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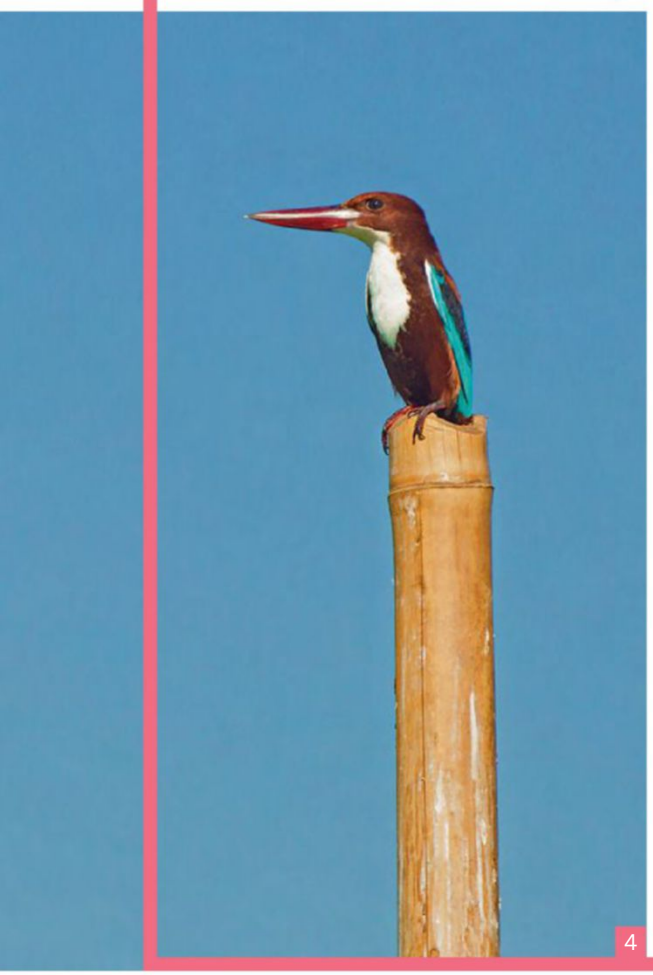

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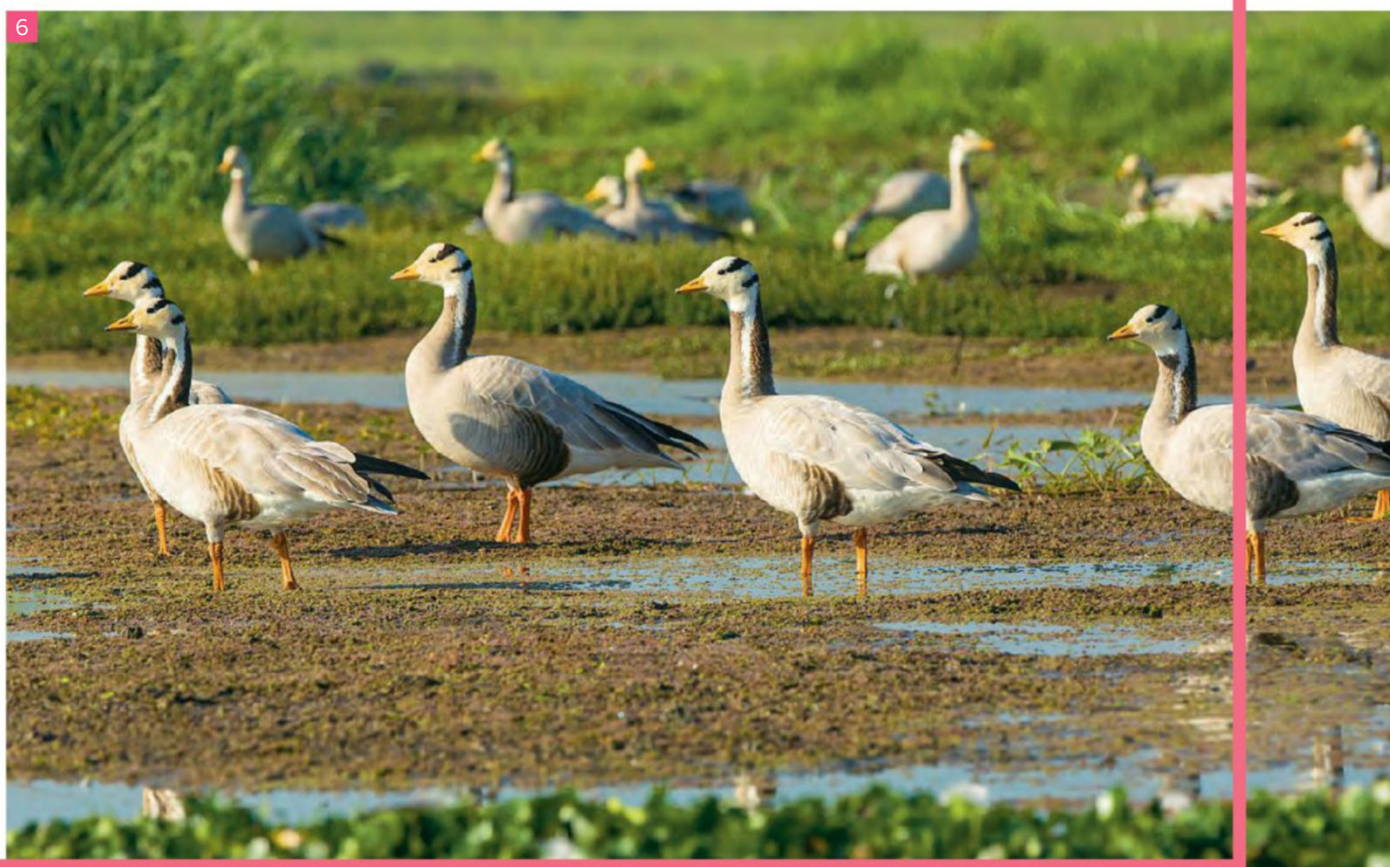
Here, the floodplains of the Brahmaputra River in the north and the Dibru River in the south play host to around 380 bird and 36 mammal species. While the larger animals arrest attention, the blink-and-miss blue dragonflies (1) in the grassland enchant equally; Under sunlight, the orange-brown wings of the ruddy shelduck (2) dazzle when in flight. Winter in the Indian subcontinent beckons these migratory birds to undertake long journeys from Europe and Central Asia; When the waters of Maguri Beel are placid, local fishermen are usually happy to ferry visitors across the lake on a boat ride (3). This allows them to chance upon the wetland birds that are usually difficult to encounter; White-breasted kingfisher, (4) a commonly found bird in the country, preys on centipedes, snails, frogs, earthworms, lizards and chameleons. These monogamous birds mostly nest at muddy banks of streams, in old trees or even termite mounds; Natives here largely live in harmony with creatures that inhabit the land. As dusk settles, a local drives his cattle (5) home; The bar-headed geese (6) have been recorded at impressive heights of more than 23,000 feet. The geeses' migratory pattern takes them across the Himalayas, where they often fly non-stop at altitudes with less than 10 per cent oxygen at sea level.



6

ITALY: RESTLESS ALONG THE RIVIERA

Pizzas aplenty, five coastal villages, a hike—and a wonderstruck writer

BY SARITHA RAO RAYACHOTI

Mounted on cliffs that rise up the Ligurian Riviera like magic beanstalks, the five villages of Cinque Terre form a part of the Cinque Terre National Park—a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

To reach the apartment you have to exit from the station, turn left, cross the bridge, turn right on the first corner and in about 330 feet, you will arrive." My husband and I didn't, however, arrive at our stay rental in Levanto in the Cinque Terre region of Italy.

Perched along the hillsides of the Ligurian coast, Cinque Terre ('five lands') comprises the five villages of Monterosso al Mare, Vernazza, Corniglia, Manarola and Riomaggiore. The region boasts of all the elements that make up a memorable summer holiday—spectacular views of the sea, hiking trails alongside vineyards and olive groves, and all the pesto and focaccia one can hope to relish.

At Levanto, (not part of the 'Famous Five' villages) we continued looking for our apartment along well-paved, urban-ish streets with supermarkets, and stocky apartment blocks where I rang the doorbell at one home, with some hope. The resident and I had a genial ten-minute bilingual conversation where each of us picked the *lingua* we knew and tried to make sense of the directions. It became evident that we had still not 'arrived'. On the street outside, a stranger cast a cursory glance in all directions, and finally told us that we had taken the wrong exit from the train station. Little did we realise then, that even upon finding our apartment, it would take us twice as long to settle in.

Late evening sunlight slanted in through lace curtains in the studio apartment that was designed to resemble a cottage. The skylight had its own remote control that would gladden the heart of the Quartermaster from the James Bond franchise. There was a sparsely equipped kitchenette with some supplies left behind by previous residents. I opened the bathroom door, and gazed fondly at the feature that had swung our decision in favour of this apartment—a washing machine. Before setting out to buy supplies, we decided to get the washing going, only to discover that the supplies in the apartment included all manner of seasoning and two kilos of salt, but no detergent.

Every supermarket we visited that evening sold detergent in quantities that were ridiculously disproportionate to the single load of laundry we intended to run. Eleven thousand kilometres away, those little detergent sachets we scoffed at and left behind back home in India must have had a frothy laugh at our expense.

In the line of shops nearby, was a quaint *panetteria* where an elderly woman sat behind the counter. The very modest display of breads and the absence of any other customers should have been a telling indication of its popularity. As Italian *nonnas* are known to do, the woman gushed over me as though I was her long-lost grandchild. I should have seen the elaborate cliché coming from a mile away, but I was enamoured by her wrinkles, her silver hair, and the gentle cadence with which she charmed us into buying bread that cost us a small fortune—more than even the large detergent pack that we reluctantly bought next door.

Back at the apartment, the washing machine emitted a muffled clank and displayed an error code. The instructions that we found online were in Italian, unintelligible but lyrical, as though Casanova had been commissioned to seduce us into washing our dirty laundry. Finally, after scrutinising the vertical drum, and running a finger along its edges, I came upon a clasp that needed to be secured for the machine to run. I still didn't know if our grand plan of hiking the hills the next day would work, but if we had to sit it out, we would do so under the Italian sun, eating expensive Italian bread, and dressed in clean clothes that smelled of Italian detergent.

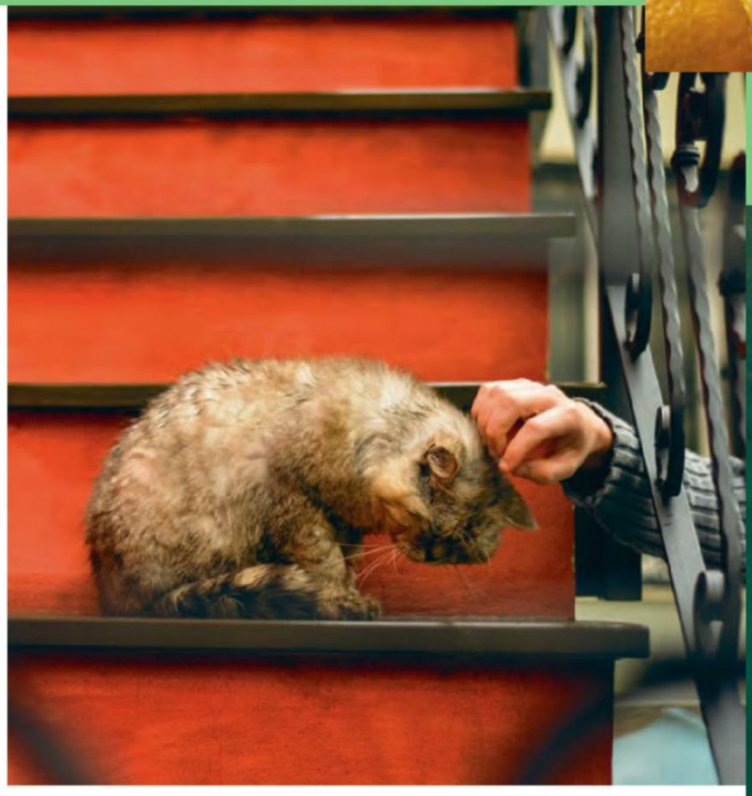
At the Levanto railway station the next morning, the aroma from the café next door to the information counter was accompanied by the sound of a voice tutoring a tourist on the noun etiquette of cappuccino ('Uno cappuccino, due cappuccini'). At the counter of the Parco Nazionale delle Cinque Terre, I admitted to being apprehensive about hiking the terrain, having just recovered from a heel fracture. I was also new to any activity that necessitated equipment of the kind being carried by the seasoned hikers we were surrounded by. The woman at the counter sized me up, asked if my shoes were comfortable and if I was carrying enough water, then deftly declared me fit to hike.

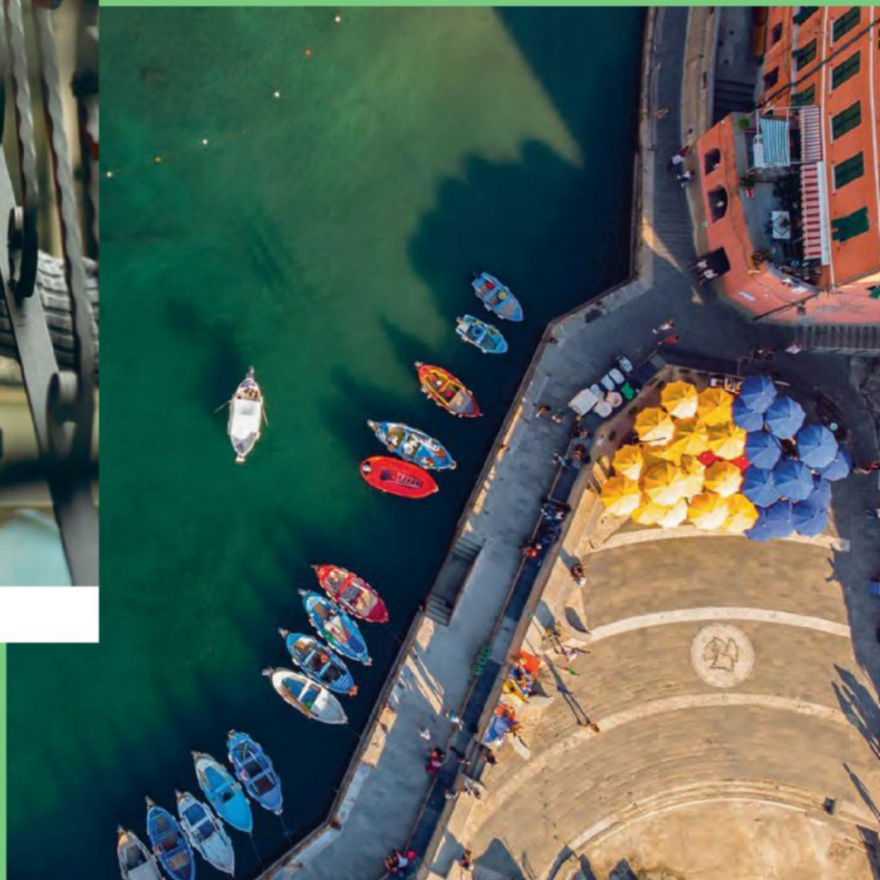
The entire Blue Trail linking the five villages is 11 kilometres long and can be hiked in about five hours. Although there was a trail between Levanto and the first village, Monterosso Al Mare, we chose instead to take the train to Monterosso and

The statue of Saint Francis of Assisi, taming the wolf of Gubbio (top left) **marks Monterosso al Mare; Seaside scenery mimics the sparkle of Mediterranean lemons and oranges** (top right) **juiced for sale; At the Vernazza harbour** (bottom right), **popsicle-toned fishing boats freckle the water; Stray cats** (bottom left) **lazing in nooks add to the villages' craggy charm.**

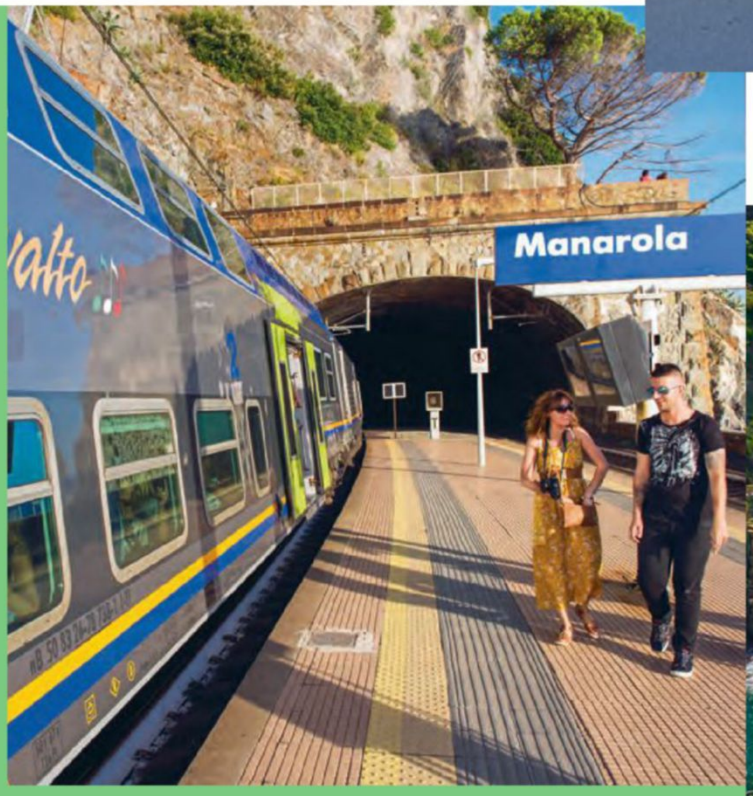
CHRISTOPHE BOISVIEUX/CORBIS/GETTY IMAGES (STATUE), IMAGE BY ERIK PRONSKE PHOTOGRAPHY/MOMENT/GETTY IMAGES (FRUIT), KATIE_MAY_BOYLE/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES (CAT), MINIMUM/MOMENT/GETTY IMAGES (HARBOUR)
PREVIOUS SPREAD: CMICOLINO/ISTOCK EDITORIAL/GETTY IMAGES

SPREMUTE
di Limone o Arancia
Fresh Lemon or
JUICE





BURASCA
5 Terre
Manarola


Manarola

then hike the 3.5 kilometres to Vernazza. The trains between villages carry all manner of tourists, from sunbathers to surfers, daredevil divers to hikers. A large group of us soon spilled onto the promenade outside the Monterosso station and stopped in our tracks, spellbound by the magnificence of the sea that lay sprawled before us.

"All the elements of an Enid Blyton adventure!" exclaimed my husband, "Hiking in the hills, swimming in the sea, and maybe even a picnic." For those weaned on books by Blyton, the craggy hillsides and the turquoise-blue seascapes of Cinque Terre appear to be the perfect setting for adventures to unfold. The only adventures we had encountered so far were of the domestic kind. But for a while, as we walked along the ramp at the beginning of our hike, we became those intrepid children who sought out mysteries involving criminals on the loose, hidden treasures in uninhabited islets, abandoned houses and unmarked trails.

At first, it was a well-paved *sentiero* or pathway, along the hillside bordering the sea at Monterosso. It gave way to stairs at the head of which, the path continued more or less at the same level for some distance. We caught frequent glimpses of the azure waters of the Ligurian coast as we wended our way through vineyards, olive groves and long stretches of dry stone walls. I later learned that these walls were the work of skilled masons who used no cement to bind them, instead strategically filling up wedges between the large boulders with smaller ones.

We met hikers coming from the other way, helpfully alerting each other to unsteady handrails and unstable stones along the path. Some of them advised as they passed us, about taking deep breaths. I put it down to my appearing winded on the more rigorous stretches. A few cast meaningful glances, and greeted me with exaggerated namastes. As it turned out, their singling me out for special attention wasn't because of the colour of my skin, nor was I wearing my nationality on my sleeve. They were just reacting to my t-shirt that screamed yoga, with its printed shloka and silhouette of a meditator.

With no food stops on the trail, and the June midday heat spiralling, we feasted on fruits, perched on a large rock under a tree. At one point during the two hour hike that we took twice as long to complete, we stopped for the now-famous view of Vernazza, where three- and four-storeyed houses in pastel colours clustered around the bay, built on what must have once been uneven, uninhabitable land. A particular shade of salmon pink dominated the palette, which, under a different sun, could have made one's face pucker at its intensity.

The *sentiero* ended at a kiosk, beyond which, the path meandered past backyards with cats lounging under fuchsia boughs of bougainvillea. As we wove through the *carucci*, stair trails, the houses we had seen from afar loomed over us, with the day's washing hanging from some of the first floor windows with their dark green louvered shutters. We found stairs leading down to the sole main street, and arrived at a piazza. It appeared hundreds of tourists had the same idea as us—to grab lunch.

Skipping the queues snaking out from various *pizzerias*, *ristorantes* and *trattorias*, we first stopped at a *gelateria* where we ate scoops of ice cream that balanced dangerously on their cones. We added a grown-up spin to our Blytonesque picnic by buying a bottle of white wine, joining the queue that led to one set of Batti Batti *Focacceria*'s tall doors, and emerging triumphantly out of the other, arms laden with food.

Our picnic—sitting on the walls that overlooked the bay, with legs dangling over the edge—was a celebration of freshly made food from local produce. The pizza was sumptuous, with a rich tomato sauce, an audacious slather of mozzarella, and a blessing of basil pesto. The focaccia was crisp on the outside, and fluffy to the bite. The sections where the baker had made indents on the dough, smuggled a burst of salt from the brine that the slab of dough is bathed in before being baked to golden perfection.

Only one Blyton element remained to be added to our holiday now. On our last morning in Cinque Terre, at the beach in Monterosso Al Mare, we ran into large Italian families—children building sandcastles, and *nonnas* swimming gracefully in the shallows, chiding their twenty-something water-averse granddaughters. While my husband swam, I sat on the shore with the waves gently lapping against me, wondering if amid adult preoccupations, we had lost the sense of adventure that we had nurtured as children. Did we ever have it? Or had we always lived vicariously through the adventures we read about?

Then again, in retrospect, I was glad to be free of adventures and misadventures of the Gosh! Jolly! By Golly! kind. It would have been a distraction from a place of such immense beauty, and lacking the decadence of a languorous post-swim aperitif.★

Getting There

There are no direct flights from India to Italy. Flights from Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru to the capital Rome usually involve one or more layovers in Middle Eastern gateway cities such as Dubai, Kuwait and Abu Dhabi, or ones in European cities like Stockholm and Frankfurt. Direct, frequent flights are available from Rome to Genoa and Pisa—the closest major airports to Levanto. Both Genoa and Pisa are connected to Levanto by regular railway services.

Facing Page: **Buildings in pastel and citrus tones** (top left) **are a fixture; You can run into delivery men carting wheelbarrows** (top right) **along the steep streets of Manarola; Grab a bite of lemony anchovies or a pasta al pesto in the region's many seaside restaurants** (bottom right)**; The Manarola railway station** (bottom left) **affords sweeping country views.**

JVT/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES (WINDOW), DIANA ROBINSON PHOTOGRAPHY/MOMENT UNRELEASED/GETTY IMAGES (MAN), OMERSUKRUGOKSU/ISTOCK UNRELEASED/GETTY IMAGES (STATION), MYCHADRE77/ISTOCK EDITORIAL/GETTY IMAGES (RESTAURANT)

TRAVEL QUIZ

TEST YOUR TRAVEL IQ

IN 1972, LED ZEPP'S JIMMY PAGE AND ROBERT PLANT, TRAVELLED TO BOMBAY TO PLAY AT THIS NOW-DEFUNCT COLABA CLUB.

WHEN BRUCE LEE MIGRATED BACK TO THE U.S., WHICH CHINATOWN RESTAURANT DID HE LIVE ABOVE OF IN SEATTLE?

WHICH AFRICAN CITY HOSTED RUMBLE IN THE JUNGLE, AN ICONIC BOXING EVENT FEATURING MUHAMMAD ALI AND GEORGE FOREMAN?

WHEN GRAHAM GREENE VISITED AUSTRIA IN 1948, HE STAYED AT THIS OPULENT HOTEL WHERE HE BEGAN TO PEN *THE THIRD MAN*.

WHAT PET DID SALVADOR DALI BRING ABOARD THE OPULENT S.S. *FRANCE* CRUISE TO NEW YORK CITY?

IN 1971, WHICH KINGDOM DID SATYAJIT RAY VISIT TO MAKE A CULTURAL DOCUMENTARY AT THE BEHEST OF THE RULER?

ANSWERS **1.** SLIP DISC **2.** RUBY CHOW'S **3.** KINSHASA, ZAIRE (NOW KINSHASA, DRC) **4.** HOTEL SACHER
5. OCELOT **6.** SIKKIM

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